THE YOUNG PRIEST

By CARDINAL VAUGHAN

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THE YOUNG PRIEST

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Herbert Cardinal Vaughan

THE YOUNG PRIEST

CONFERENCES ON THE APOSTOLIC LIFE

BY

HERBERT, CARDINAL VAUGHAN

ARCHBISHOP OF WESTMINSTER

EDITED BY HIS BROTHER

MONSIGNOR, CANON JOHN S. VAUGHAN

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EDITOR'S PREFACE.

Although Cardinal Vaughan wrote several small booklets on a variety of devotional subjects, which have had a wide circulation, he never found time, amid his incessant occupations, to undertake any prolonged literary work. It was only when, at last, he was stricken down by disease, and compelled to give up his active life altogether, that he instinctively took to his pen.

When he could no longer preach, nor ordain, nor confirm, nor make his visitations, nor superintend in person the affairs of the diocese, he determined to occupy his leisure moments, when not actually praying or meditating, in composing a small volume on the Apostolic life of the Priest.

The exertion this entailed was a considerable tax upon his diminished strength, and nothing but an indomitable energy, courage, and zeal

could have enabled him to continue working at it, as he did, almost up to the very last.

He expressed a desire that I should supply Conferences on two or three subjects; but, on reflection, I have come to the conclusion that those to whom the volume is addressed would prefer it to be as it is, *i.e.*, wholly his own work. Consequently, I have confined myself to simply preparing the pages for publication, and (in so far as I could) correcting the proofs.

JOHN S. CANON VAUGHAN.

ARCHBISHOP'S HOUSE, WESTMINSTER,
January 1904.

CONTENTS.

PAGE

EDITOR'S PREFACE v

INTRODUCTION.

For whom these Conferences are Intended . 1

CONFERENCE I.

The Priest 13

CONFERENCE II.

The Mother of the Priest 41

CONFERENCE III.

The Adorable Trinity 54

CONFERENCE IV.

God Our Father 65

CONFERENCE V.

Love of the Incarnate Word 76

CONFERENCE VI.

The Apostolic Standard 95

CONFERENCE VII.

PAGE

Apostolic Obedience 113

CONFERENCE VIII.

The Eucharistic Majesty of the Incarnate Word 136

CONFERENCE IX.

Apostolic Labours 179

CONFERENCE X.

Affability, Gentleness, Tact 211

CONFERENCE XI.

The Priest in Partnership with Jesus Christ 226

CONFERENCE XII.

Prayer, an Apostolic Work 239

CONFERENCE XIII.

Humility the Foundation of the Apostolic Life 256

CONFERENCE XIV.

PAGE

HUMILITY THE FOUNDATION OF THE APOSTOLIC LIFE—*continued* 261

CONFERENCE XV.

HUMILITY—ITS CONSEQUENCE 274

CONFERENCE XVI.

THE VALUE OF THE SOUL 284

CONFERENCE XVII.

APOSTOLIC TRIUMPHS 315

CONFERENCE XVIII.

APOSTOLIC DISINTERESTEDNESS 325

CONFERENCE XIX.

RESOLUTIONS AS TO CERTAIN PRACTICES . . 335

THE YOUNG PRIEST.

INTRODUCTION.

FOR WHOM THESE CONFERENCES ARE INTENDED.

The distinctive work of the Episcopate is to produce and multiply a holy Priesthood. The Priesthood of Jesus is stored up in the Bishop, and he is bound not only to give it birth, but to feed, train, and perfect it on the model of Christ and His Apostles. The Bishop has no more important and vital work than this. He bears the Office and the responsibility of Paternity. He is a debtor to Christ, for whom he acts, and he is a debtor to the sacerdotal sons whom he has begotten in the Sacrament of Order.

A father may place his children in the hands of tutors to be trained, but he does not thereby divest himself of responsibility for their training. The Bishop bears the responsibility of a father.

Many circumstances intervene to determine the extent and weight of influence that a Bishop will exercise over his sons. Each Bishop will account to God for his own conduct, and for such opportunities as have come to his hand.

I am under a grave obligation to the Priests whom I have ordained at Mill Hill during the last thirty years, and sent forth for life into the midst of the heathen populations of the world. And I am under similar obligation to those whom I have ordained *ad titulum missionis* for the work of the conversion of England. The obligation is, to give them the best assistance I can to become Apostolic men.

My purpose in the following Conferences is not to give a course of instruction to ecclesiastical students who are still in the seminary, nor to address Priests already experienced and grown old in the mission whose habits of thought and conduct are finally set. But there is an anxious and vital period of transition, beginning with ordination to the Priesthood and continuing during a somewhat undefined and uncertain period—that is, until the mind and character have taken their permanent bent and direction. It is to Priests passing through this period that I wish to offer

suggestions. Religious orders have the advantage of a noviciate, wherein novices are supposed to master the principles of the interior life, and to obtain the formation which is characteristic of their institute. The advantage is great. The secular clergy have no such noviciate, their ecclesiastical training runs on, *pari passu*, with their studies, and consists of religious exercises, of the observance of rule, and of their own personal efforts to become spiritual men. Frequently they are left very much to themselves for direction and growth in the sanctity their vocation presupposes. Sometimes a Confessor, a friend, a book, a Saint's Life becomes their guide. The Holy Ghost works by various means. And where there is an earnest desire of greater things, He never fails to supply a need.

But it remains true that the earlier years of a man's life are usually more marked by the growth of the physical and rational life than of the supernatural. Even after the boy has grown into the adult and become a theological student, with habits of piety well formed, and the conviction that God calls him to the Priesthood, there often remains much of the light-heartedness—perhaps giddiness—and irresponsibility of boyhood. Sub-

jection to a routine of discipline, though mechanically insuring the formation of certain habits, is not without some drawbacks. It does not sufficiently throw the man in upon himself and force him to consider and choose for himself those rules of conduct which will become most useful when he begins to find himself emancipated from college discipline, and cast upon the resources of his own discretion. He has no doubt been furnished, as part of his professional equipment, with some knowledge of the principles of the interior life; but as his life has been one of college routine, and he has not felt the weight of personal responsibility, he has not been, as it were, forced to discriminate and to decide upon the particular truths and practices that he ought to make in a special way his own. Of course there are certain broad rules and lines of conduct that are strictly professional, and must be observed by every Priest. But there are many important details that will depend for application upon natural temperament, and the special grace that God offers to each several soul—*dividens singulis prout vult: aliis sic aliis autem sic.* Thus each young Priest will have much to consider and decide for himself personally beyond his observance of the general

rule which is laid down as common for the observance of all true ecclesiastics.

It would be unreasonable to expect an ecclesiastical youth to carefully and finally think out for himself the particular rules he should follow during his sacerdotal life while he is still engaged in his ordinary course of theological study. Nor can we hope that the Ordination Retreat will see him through the problems which require much time, thought, and prayer before they can be thoroughly solved.

Indeed, a considerable part of the final Ordination Retreat is often taken up with practical details of rubrics and practising the celebration of holy Mass. And the thoughts that fill the mind at that time have more direct reference to the privilege of promotion to the Sacred Office of the Priesthood itself than to the rule of life which has still to be worked out.

It were greatly to be desired that the period of preparation for the ministry could be systematically lengthened. The advantage of two or even three additional years given to study in Rome or elsewhere after the ordinary curriculum would tell powerfully on the spiritual influence a Priest would exercise over his flock. I have myself felt keenly

that I have been rendering a real service to souls when I have been able to keep a young Priest back to enable him to pursue his studies and his spiritual training for two or three years after his ordination. Our Lord began His active ministry at thirty, and this no doubt was, like all else He did, for our example and instruction.

But short of so far reaching a change which we cannot expect to become general, except under special circumstances, it would be highly desirable to give to every young Priest a period of at least from six to twelve months, during which he might be, as they say, feeling his feet and deliberately preparing his soul by study, reading, and prayer for a life of Apostolic perfection. For this a house of pastoral theology, under some experienced Priest, or apartments in the Episcopium under the eye of the Bishop, as in ages of greater faith and fervour, would be needed. But this is by no means impossible. Experiments in this direction have been made in different Dioceses during the last thirty or forty years, and if they have not been altogether successful, they need not discourage us. We can see where mistakes have been made, where a provision and remedy is needed, and what is required to make the system

work smoothly and profitably. The difficulty, of course, is to find a suitable head. But even here we need not be dismayed if we find something less than perfection. Far more important is the grounding of our men, while in the central seminaries, in a good Apostolic spirit and in a humble and docile mind, than the finding of a genius or of a saint to put at the head of such an undertaking. If the young men be of the right sort, they will learn much for themselves; they will grow with a strong and rapid growth, the Holy Ghost teaching them; spoon-feeding and personal attention of a minute kind by a Superior will not be necessary.

The misfortune is where it becomes necessary to plunge a young Priest, before the chrism is dry upon the palms of his hands, into the excessive and exhaustive occupations of the ministry in a large and undermanned mission. He has no time for study and reflection. He becomes at once absorbed in active work; and as to his own spiritual life, it drifts vaguely, and is as subject to eddying influences as a cork borne down upon the surface of a rapid stream. Scarcely less trying than this is the fate of a young Priest who is subjected to the control of a Rector altogether out

of sympathy with the Apostolic spirit. Hence, no doubt, the placing of a young Priest becomes a matter of great importance both to himself and to the Diocese, for his whole future will probably be determined by his first years in the ministry.

Where circumstances overrule the desire of the Bishop, and he cannot make the provisions he would wish for him, the young Priest must have sense enough to study the situation for himself, and, where in doubt, to seek guidance from a trustworthy director. God will not abandon him to failure and laxity if he be faithful. But to stand alone evidently needs greater strength and determination than to advance in the company of those who are fervent and like-minded.

As to the foreign missioners educated at Mill Hill, I should very much like to give at least six months to all of them after their ordination for further preparation for the mission. But in some respects they are more favourably situated than young Priests sent from college direct on to the English mission. They have more time and leisure for preparation and thought; and even on their foreign missions they must be for a considerable time isolated and thrown in upon themselves by reason of the language and life of the heathen

populations to whom they are sent. So that they have time for reflection.

My intention in printing these Conferences is to offer assistance by way of suggestion to all of these young Priests, whether they be in a house for pastoral training or living for a time at the centre, the Archbishop's house, or sent direct upon the mission. I say by way of suggestion, because it is far more important that they should, each of them, work out their own salvation, than that they should simply stoically assent to what may be set before them. Many truths need to be thoroughly digested in order to be assimilated and become part of our mind and of our practical conviction. And in this digestion they undergo a process which presents them to us in a different way to that in which they were received. A truth that I may have become thoroughly familiar with for years, so that its enunciation becomes a platitude, strikes me in a new way, or in a new light, or on a different side later on in life. Thus, for instance, the Our Father, the Hail Mary, the *Stabat Mater*, come upon me with all the force of a revelation, by some grace or light which had never been vouchsafed to me during the earlier part of my life. And just as some truths affect me at one

period of my spiritual life and not at another, so the truths and practices that entirely master and control my spirit may not at all affect others who read of them. Why? because they have not that practical knowledge of them which I may have, and which is an altogether different thing to abstract and speculative knowledge that is apart from the special action of the Holy Ghost.

Then, again, this is to be taken into account. Character, disposition, the greater or smaller measure of grace received, the antecedents of the soul, and the future designs of the Holy Ghost as to its sanctity and perfection, have very much to say in determining the effect that this or that or the other course of thought will produce upon the soul.

Again, this is evident. The truths which I may set forth may often be set forth very imperfectly, very crudely, or they may be dealt with in a manner that may be very unsatisfactory to one person in a particular state of mind, but not to another. Now, what I want to insist upon is this, that the value to be got out of these Conferences is the result attained through their having passed through your own mind. I had much rather that you should draw out your own practical con-

clusions as the outcome of consideration and prayer than that you should adopt mine. The really important and vital thing is, that you should think out matters seriously for yourself, so as to get your soul upon the right lines, and not to drift or be carried away by fortuitous circumstances, which may lead you eventually you know not where.

There is one class of Priests to whom these Conferences are in no way addressed: the class of men whose aim seems to be how little they may do for God and His Church short of committing grave sin. They do not put it to themselves in this blunt way; but they are those who regulate their conduct by the lax interpretation of the principles of moral theology and by an easy-going casuistry, rather than by the maxims of the ascetical schools of the spiritual life and the practice and examples of the Apostles and the Saints. The number of the former has always been great, so that the Apostle exclaimed with sorrow, "Omnes quaerunt quae sua sunt non quae Jesu Christi." Of course we are, most of us, often dropping under this reproach, because self-love is perpetually cropping up. But it is one thing, often, to fall under our natural miseries and to lament this

condition of our soul, and quite another to make up one's mind that one's course shall be to enjoy oneself as much as possible, to be ever self-indulgent, and never to undertake more labour, more self-restraint, than is absolutely necessary in order to avoid sin.

CONFERENCE I.

THE PRIEST.

TU ES SACERDOS IN AETERNUM SECUNDUM ORDINEM.—MELCHISEDEC.
—*Ex communi Apostolorum.*

SECTION I.—CHRIST'S PRIESTHOOD.

THE world pays no attention to the sublime dignity of the Priesthood, which it does not recognise. For "the sensual man perceiveth not the things that are of the Spirit of God; for it is foolishness to him, and he cannot understand" (1 Cor. ii.).

It may look upon the Priest as exercising certain religious functions more or less in demand, and as belonging to one of what are called the learned professions. It knows that a claim to some extraordinary power is made on his behalf. But it either discounts, or disallows, this claim altogether, and justifies its doing so by pointing to the tone, conversation, and conduct of individual Priests, which are indistinguishable from that of laymen. Priests, unhappily, are largely

responsible for the unfavourable opinion formed of the Priesthood by the world.

But whatever the character of the individual Priest, it still remains true that "the sensual man perceiveth not the things that are of the Spirit of God; . . . he cannot understand." The world was not able to accept even Jesus Christ Himself.

It realises neither the fallen condition of the creature nor the sanctity and perfection of the Creator. It rejects the doctrine that the Creator has ordained a Priest to stand as Mediator between God and man; and that this Priest, this Mediator and Redeemer, is Jesus Christ. It rejects the doctrine that Jesus Christ, in furtherance of this divine dispensation, calls out of human society a number of men to become His associates, and actually sharers in His Priesthood. Nevertheless the fact stands, Our Lord sets men apart to this day, raises them to a position and a dignity unlike anything else on earth. By being rightly ordained, they participate in the royal Priesthood of Jesus Christ, and become pledged to conform their lives to the mind and the life of Him whom they represent. *Gerunt Jesu Christi personam.*

It is not by sense or the light of reason, but by

the light of faith that we are able to comprehend the sublime nature of the Office of the Priesthood. Listen to the inspired Apostle on this subject.

We have a great High Priest that hath passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, who hath an everlasting Priesthood, whereby He is able to save for ever them that come . . . to God by Him; always living to make intercession for us, . . . a priesthood . . . which breaks down the wall of partition that was set up between God and man by sin; which remits sin and raises man to a new life by the Blood of Christ. The Blood of Christ, who by the Holy Ghost offered Himself unspotted unto God, cleanses our conscience from dead works to serve the living God. Christ appeared for the destruction of sin, by the sacrifice of Himself. He is entered into heaven itself that He may appear now in the presence of God for us, and He has become to all that obey Him the cause of eternal Salvation.

He exercises His Office in heaven, visibly to the Blessed, invisibly to us. It is still He who exercises it upon earth, by, through, and with the ministry of chosen instruments, who, in His Name, not in their own, in His Priesthood, not in theirs, stand between God and the people, offering the

one Sacrifice that alone is availing to the end of time.

The closeness of the union—the identity, we may call it—of Christ with His chosen ministers was the theme of Our Lord's last most touching discourse, after He had ordained His Apostles sacrificing Priests.

"Abide in Me," said He, "and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abide in the vine, so neither can ye, unless ye abide in Me. I am the Vine; ye are the branches; he that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit: for without Me ye can do nothing."

The branches, that is the Priests, have spread over the world; but in some there is none of the sap of the Vine. Of such as these, He said, "He shall be cut off as a branch and shall wither, and they shall gather him up, and cast him into the fire, and he burneth."

Thus, if any man has been engrafted into the Priesthood of Christ, and bear not the fruit of the Vine, he shall be judged, cut off as a dead branch, and shall burn for ever.

Not only on this most solemn occasion, but on other occasions of bestowing power and jurisdic-

tion, our Lord habitually identified His Priests with Himself. It was His Priesthood, His power that they were to exercise. Thus He said: He that heareth you heareth Me. As the Father hath sent Me, I also send you. Ye shall receive the Holy Ghost to dwell with you for ever, and I Myself will always abide in you. Go ye into the whole world and make disciples of all men, and I am ever with you, in you, baptizing, teaching, and saving fallen man from his enemies.

Men were thus made the vicarious instruments of the sacred humanity, as that humanity itself had been made by the hypostatic union the instrument of the Godhead.

It would be vain to search through human or divine history from the beginning of the world until now to find anything comparable to this extraordinary scheme for the regeneration and elevation of mankind to a higher estate. It sounds more like fable than fact that God should come down to earth and associate men with Himself in the exercise of the most astonishing and unheard-of spiritual powers.

Section II.—The Priest is a Christ.

It behoves those who have just been ordained seriously to consider the order they have received: *Diligenter considerare ordinem a vobis receptam.* This warning is given them by Mother Church herself.

Be not satisfied with the glow of emotion, and the feeling of having been, as it were, stunned by the act just completed. Feelings soon pass, and you will be left to form your life upon such an estimate of your Priesthood as you shall presently form after serious consideration. It is therefore of supreme importance, *diligenter considerare ordinem a vobis receptam.*

We read in the life of St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi, that she realised so vividly the office of the Priesthood, that she used to speak of the chaplain of the convent simply as "the Christ." All Priests were to her "Christs." She could never designate them by any other name. She saw Christ within them, and knew not what else to call them. Mother St. Teresa of Jesus, Abbess of the Convent of St. Clare de Laveur, was favoured by God with a great devotion to the Priesthood of

Jesus Christ, and has left a record of many thoughts upon which we shall draw, epitomising or quoting her words as convenient.

The Priest by his office enters into a threefold relationship with the blessed Trinity.

The Father shares with him His paternity by using the Priest to give a sacramental being to His divine Son, and to beget to Him sons, by imparting to them a divine life.

The Son gives to the Priest not only the efficient power of His own word, but also Himself. He unites Himself to the Priest in order to work in him and by him, as the means whereby He bestows Himself and His sacramental life upon the faithful.

The Holy Ghost bestows upon him a superabundance of gifts and graces, in order that he may be able to detach souls from the world, to enlighten, guide, and fill them with the love of God.

Christ acts through the Priest as the Word acted through the sacred humanity. The spirit of Christ is in the Priest, living and acting by him as an instrument. He works by him, in some ways independently of his dispositions, and in other ways dependently upon them. The Priest,

considered as an instrument, can neither increase nor diminish the effects of the divine action, which is altogether the work of Jesus.

The essence of the greatness of the Priest, the basis and substance of the sacerdotal grace, is the sublime and divine union, on which Jesus enters with the soul of the Priest—a union so close and intimate that human language can only repeat, *sacerdos alter Christus.*

The Priest ought not to work as a mercenary, but as a true son of his heavenly Father, who looks upon him as an *alter Christus*, carrying on the work of the incarnate word, and acting as an organ of the Holy Ghost. At the same time these titles of honour do not exclude the state of servitude which Jesus Christ Himself entered into. Jesus desires to continue, in and through His Priests, the servitude in which He lived while on earth, in which He still lives in the blessed Eucharist: that is, He desires the Priest to be the servant of God, His Father; the servant of men, His brethren—in a word, the servant of all. Or might we not better say, in apostolic language, "the slave" or "bondsman" of Jesus Christ.

Jesus manifested Himself as a *slave* or *bondsman* by all kinds of labours, services, and sacri-

fices while He was visible in the flesh; and He continues to do the same by the obedience, humiliation, and annihilation of self which He practises in the Eucharist.

He desires that Priests who bear His office should aim at a similar self-sacrifice and devotedness, by which their life becomes in generosity that of a voluntary slave rather than that of a servant, who gives his service for hire, and can terminate his engagement when he pleases. They are, according to the measure of their grace, to give up their whole strength, their whole heart, their whole life. They are to sacrifice their pleasures, their personal tastes and interests themselves, wherever these come in the way of the sacerdotal life. Their life is to be distinctly and consciously formed upon the life of Jesus Christ, in order to become worthy of His Priesthood.

Jesus might, had He pleased, have acted upon men otherwise; but what He could have done He has not done, will not do, and even makes it impossible for Himself to do. It is the will of our loving Saviour, and according to the counsels of His infinite wisdom and of His immense love for souls, to make use of man. He deigns to employ

him, and puts Himself in the necessity of standing, in some way, in need of him to accomplish His divine work, to spread and establish His kingdom.

Section III.—The Priest a Source of Light, of Love, of Life.

It is certain that from the Eucharist, wherein He personally abides, Jesus Christ sends over His Church, as over His body, and over each of the members of His body, His love, His truth, His light. He has concentrated these substantially in His Sacred Humanity, as in a divine central treasury, that they may thence be incessantly poured forth over multitudes, who form a part of His mystical body; and not only over living members, but over those that are dead in sin, in order that they may be raised to life.

But there are multitudes who never approach this centre of truth and of light, and even turn away from it in ignorance, indifference, and even in hatred.

Jesus has, therefore, made His Priests secondary centres, in order by their means to shed on souls the influences of His light, His truth, and His

love. Thus one of the greatest obligations, one of the most binding duties of the Priest, is to live in such a manner that his soul may always be a luminous centre, a burning light; Jesus having chosen him to be a light to the world. It is the will of Jesus that all His Priests should be burning and shining lights—burning by sanctity, shining by knowledge.

The Priest, therefore, is essentially identified with the work of Jesus in the blessed Eucharist.

"The vision of the Priesthood that Jesus gave me," writes the venerable Mother St. Teresa of Jesus, "represents to me generally, but in a very distinct and luminous manner, the sublime dignity, the divine power of the Priesthood, and shows me that, being essentially bound up with the Eucharist, the Priesthood is, in union with it, the life, the light, the strength, the stay of souls; that it enlightens, purifies, and sanctifies them by dispensing to them the mysteries of God, the infinite treasures of the merits of Christ, and the author Himself of grace.

"I see that the Priesthood is not only a real power in the Church, but is of itself a living and quickening power, possessing in itself a true source of grace, and a principle of life to be communi-

cated to souls; and this because the Priesthood is not only the most perfect representation of Jesus, but because it is, in a sense, Jesus Himself continuing the office of His supreme and divine mission, either towards God His Father, or in behalf of souls."

The Priestly vocation has a twofold mission, which forms its essence and is the end of its existence, to which, therefore, all the life and labours of the Priest ought to be referred, viz., the service, the honour, the glory of Jesus in the Eucharist, and the sanctification of souls to His glory.

This divine mission binds the Priest in a loving relationship of intimacy with Jesus. It creates a constant and entire dependence on Him. Thus he becomes capable of paying the homage which he is bound to render to Him in the Eucharist, both in virtue of his state of life and of his contracted obligations. The Priesthood has been established only for the Eucharist and on account of the Eucharist. The life, the mind, the glory of a Priest, therefore, belong entirely to Jesus in the Host. He is to honour Him by continuing visibly His Priesthood, by revealing the ineffable and divine life of the Word in the sacred humanity, and the life of the sacred humanity in the divine

Word. The Priest's life, his habits and actions, do not belong to himself, but to Jesus, to whom he is consecrated and dedicated as His own minister and representative.

Jesus desires the heart of the Priest to be a source of flowing love, in order to bestow unceasingly on souls the outpouring of divine charity. His love of souls is not to be the love of his own natural heart, but the sacred love of Jesus Himself, who has become his living power.

To be faithful to this his mission, he ought constantly to seek for souls, to love them, to draw them towards God in order to make them love Him, and to make himself love Him more generously by loving Him with them.

"It is revealed to me," says the same holy soul, "that Jesus in the soul of the Priest is a spring of life, of light, and of love; and that the Priest is for souls, in like manner, a spring of life, of light, and of love.

"Jesus imparts a share of the fulness of His divine life to the soul of the Priest, and He desires His life to be manifested in the fruitfulness of the souls over whom the Priest exercises his divine mission.

"The fruit of this fertility in the soul of the

Priest seems to me to be a spirit of absolute unworldliness, a complete self-effacement, in order that the spirit of Jesus may possess his whole being. This spirit of unworldliness and this life of self-effacement form the atmosphere and element wherein the consecrated soul must live, in order to arrive at a true Priestly holiness.

Section IV.—Causes of Failure.

"The light shows me that this truth, though generally known, is not practically understood by some consecrated souls, because they do not sufficiently realise that their whole life must be summed up on the duties of their sacred ministry, and that the spirit of the world and its ways and customs are not to be for them what they are for the rest of Christians.

"The first cause of failure which the light discovers to me in the sacred minister, is the want of that spirit of separation and of unworldliness which hinders the Priest from keeping his mind and heart far enough away from the world. Hence follows the weakening of the sacerdotal spirit, and the little fruit produced by his ministry. Instead of revealing and manifesting

the life of Christ, the Priest reveals and manifests himself.

"A second cause of failure in Priestly life is the want of generous and disinterested zeal. If the love of Jesus is fettered in ordinary souls in which He meets with hindrances, it suffers a twofold captivity in the soul of the Priest, wherein it finds such obstacles. It is not only the love of Jesus which is imprisoned, but Jesus Himself who is made a prisoner in the place where He should have full and perfect liberty; for the soul of the Priest is the exclusive property of the divine lover. It has only been chosen and separated from the world to be used by Him as a faithful instrument, and it ought always to be in such a condition that He may act through it.

"Offering up as he does the Lamb of God, the Priest ought to be His first victim, by a devotedness without limit and without measure, which should make him, in some sort, a martyr to the love and service of God in the sacred Host.

"My great cause of sorrow is the sight I have of the feebleness of the Priestly spirit in some consecrated souls. An interior voice says continually—'Pray, sacrifice thyself unceasingly to obtain from My heart the graces of light and

of strength, of which My ministers stand in need.'

"To these interior words succeeds a light which shows me chasms wide and deep as an abyss, and the Eucharistic sorrows which they cause to the heart of Jesus, and the almost infinite evil which they work in souls.

"Words cannot express that vision, nor the pain and suffering which it causes me. It excites, above all, a keen desire to make reparation to Jesus in the Eucharist, and of union with Him, to ask together with Him and by Him of the holy Trinity, in the name of the Eucharistic satisfactions, that the true spirit and holiness of the Priesthood may be renewed in the Priests of holy Church.

"My interior light insists more and more on the absence of zeal as a cause of failure in the Priestly life. It shows me that the unquenchable zeal which ought to make of a Priest a true martyr of the God whom he daily offers up in sacrifice, is found by Jesus in few only of His Priests. In some it is soiled, tainted, if not entirely destroyed, by the spirit of self, that is, by self-interest; and our dear Lord finds Himself a prisoner in shameful bondage. His divine charity—which had made

the heart of the Priest a channel to convey to souls the outpourings of His love—finds itself cramped and straitened in the narrow prison of a heart shrivelled by self-love."

The great wound, more difficult to cure than any other, more hideous than all in its deadly effects on souls, is the weakening of the Priestly spirit, the want of true and disinterested devotedness, the want of purity of zeal in some of the clergy. Though they are not bad, yet in them and by them the sublime and divine dignity of the Priesthood is assimilated to the spirit of the world by compromises and connivances between the sacerdotal spirit and the spirit of the world, which is its most irreconcilable and bitter enemy. Thus degraded, the dignity of the Priesthood loses its power and ascendency over souls.

The high ideal of the Priesthood, formed by souls that live to God and see His interests in the modern world in which we live, is in perfect harmony with the estimate of the Priesthood formed by the fathers and saints of the Church in every age.

Section V.—The Fathers and the Saints on the Priesthood.

We may now test the value of what has been said so far of the office of the Christian Priesthood, by brief reference to the teaching and practice of the fathers and saints of the Church.

It would be impossible within these limits to do more than present a short *catena* of deliberate and well-weighed testimonies, each of which may be treated as axiomatic.

(1) Thus, St. John Chrysostom says: "The power of Priests is more venerable and greater than that of kings. Speak not of the royal purple, of diadems, of golden vestures—these are but shadows, frailer than the flowers of spring, compared to the power and privileges of the Priesthood. He who honours the Priest honours Christ; he who injures the Priest injures Christ Himself."

(2) *Si regum fulgore compares Sacerdotes et Principum diademoti, longe erit inferius quam si plumbi metallum ad auri fulgorem compares.* —St. Ambrose.

(3) *Praetulit vos Sacerdotes Regibus et Imperatoribus; praetulit angelis.*—St. Bernard.

(4) *Miraculum stupendum, magna, immensa, infinita sacerdotii dignitor.*—St. Ephrem.

(5) *Excedit omnem cogitationem donum dignitatis sacerdotalis.*—St. Ephrem.

(6) *O maxima potestas; descendit de Coelo in carne Verbum, et altaris reperitur in mensa. Hoc sacerdotibus erogatur ex gratia, quod nusquam datum est angelis. Hic assistunt Deo; illi contrectant manibus, tribuunt, et in se suscipiunt.* —St. Lawrence Justinian.

(7) *Qui sacerdotem dixit prorsus divinum insinuavit virum. Angelica imo divina est dignitas sacerdotis.*—St. Dionysius.

(8) *Presbyteros ad custodiam sponsae suae tanquam vicarios suos reliquit.*—Peter of Blois.

(9) *Sponsae custodes, amici, necessarii, domestici.*—St. Bernard.

(10) *Munus Spiritus sancti sacerdotis officium.* —St. Ambrose.

(11) *Mundi salvatores sacerdotes.*—St. Jerome.

(12) *Potestas sacerdotum est sicut potestas Divinarum personarum.*—St. Bernard.

(13) *Ovenerandа sacerdotum dignitas, in quorum manibus Dei Filius, velut in utero Virginis, incarnatur.*—St. Augustin.

(14) *Tantum inter sacerdotem et quemlibet*

probam interesse debet, quantum inter coelum et terram discriminis est.—St. Isidore.

(15) *Nequaquam sunt hujus mundi sacerdotes, sed alterius mundi, alterius saeculi.*—St. Macarius.

(16) *Nolite ad reliquorum mortalium humilia vota descendere.*—St. Ambrose.

(17) *Sim tecum, Domine crucifixus mundo, ut sic mortuus sim et vita mea sit tecum abscondita in Deo. Ovita mea felix, quae abscondita est ipsi mundo, et, sociata ipso Christo, in Deo centro quietatur.*—St. Bonaventure.

(18) *Nos sacerdotes loquimur foris; Ipse intellectum aperit. Ipse tenet.*

(19) *Ipse movet, Ipse aedificat.*—St. Augustine.

(20) *Nisi intus sit qui doceat, lingua in vaceum laborat.*—St. Gregory.

(21) *Sacerdotes parentes Christi.*—St. Bernard.

(22) *Virgo benedicta, excusa me, quia non loquor contra te, sacerdotium praetulit supra te.* —St. Bernardine.

(23) *Beata Virgo solum semel aperuit coelum, sacerdos qualibet missa. Potestas sacerdotalis saperat potestatem Virginis.*—St. Vincent Ferrer.

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Section VI.—Holy Dread of Ordination to the Priesthood.

A vivid faith in the stupendous office of the Priesthood naturally produces a holy dread and a shrinking from so great an obligation and responsibility.

Thus St. Gregory Nazianzum wrote of his own time: "No one is ordained Priest in a joyful frame of mind, but is rather weighed down with the thought of the heavy burden and responsibility."

St. Epiphamius says that people entertained so high an opinion of the Priesthood that they dreaded, and even declined, to undertake the office. St. Cyprian, St. Gregory, St. Fulgentius, St. Ephrem, St. Mark, St. Ammonius, and many others, endeavoured to escape ordination by flight, by hiding themselves, and even by cutting off their fingers, or otherwise maiming their body.

St. Cyprian writes of the Roman clergy: *reperio omnes sanctos divini Ministerii ingentem veluti molem formidantes.*

St. Ambrose says of himself: *Quam resistebam ne ordinarer!*

St. Benedict, patriarch of the western monks,

never became a Priest. St. Francis of Assisi never got beyond the diaconate. An angel holding a vessel containing water pure as crystal appeared to him, saying, "The soul of a Priest ought to be pure and undefiled as this crystal." After this vision nothing could persuade this holy deacon to ascend to the higher step; and his example has been followed by many of his saintly children.

St. John Chrysostom had long before taught that the "soul of a priest ought to be more pure than the rays of the sun."

St. Ignatius of Loyola spent a whole year in prayers and penance as a preparation for his first Mass. St. Francis Xavier retired to Monselice, near Padua, and there for forty days and nights gave himself up to prayer, accompanied by fasting and other severe austerities, living in a hut and begging a few crusts of bread to support life. It was only after this preparation that he celebrated his first Mass.

In the "Revelations of St. Bridget" we read that she had once a vision of a young Priest saying his first Mass in the church of a monastery on Whitsunday. At the consecration she beheld a fire descend from heaven enveloping the whole altar, and in the hands of the Priest a Host, and in

the Host a living Lamb, which had the face of a man, burning as in a flame of fire. At the same time she heard a voice which said: "As you now see fire coming down upon the altar, so did the Holy Ghost on this day descend upon the Apostles to inflame their hearts with the love of God."

If the first fruits of the Priesthood are offered to God with due preparation and great fervour, it is reasonable to believe that the Holy Ghost will descend upon the soul of the new Priest in flames of zeal, and with an abundance of heavenly gifts. With such thoughts and examples before us, it is difficult to understand how Priests should ever turn the celebration of their first Mass into a day for racketing and feasting, allowing friends and relatives to make the event a sign for demonstrations which, however well meant, are most distracting, if not absolutely destructive of interior recollection and intimate communion with God.

It was not thus that our blessed models taught us to say our first Mass.

St. Peter of Alcantara refused to proceed to each of the Holy Orders until compelled by obedience. He received the subdiaconate after inflicting upon himself daily the rudest penances and the severest disciplines, with renewed and strong

resolutions to labour to acquire the perfection corresponding to this sacred Order. In his twenty-fifth year his Provincial put him under strict obedience to receive the Priesthood. His preparation consisted in the most fervent supplications addressed to God, in the exercise of profound humiliations, and in the use of hair shirts and disciplines wherewith he copiously drew blood. He felt bound on such an occasion to offer his own blood to Our Lord for the Precious Blood over which he was about to receive so mysterious a power. Those who assisted at his first Mass were deeply affected by his tears, the crimson glow that suffused his worn and usually pallid features, and by the warmth and fire of faith and devotion which were communicated from the saint to all who were present.

This holy fear and reverence are inculcated upon the Ordinandi by the Church in the present day; for the Bishop warns them that *Cum magno quippe timore ad tantum gradum ascendendum est.* If any one is conscious to himself that he has unduly pressed forward, if he has rushed in where the saints have feared to advance, it is not too late even now to repair to some extent at least the mischief or the indiscretion. Let him at once

enter upon a diligent study of the Mass, and offer it up with the fervour that he would wish to have had in celebrating his first Mass. He will also render himself less unworthy of the Priesthood by carefully considering the subjects brought forward in these Conferences, and by making wise and prudent rules for his future conduct as a Priest.

Section VII.—St. Catherine of Siena's Letter on the Priesthood.

The following letter by St. Catherine of Siena to a newly ordained Priest will be read with interest:—

"I, Catherine, a servant and slave of the servants of Jesus Christ, write to you in His Precious Blood, with the desire to see you enlightened by the true and perfect light, so that you may know the dignity to which you have been raised.

"Without His light you cannot know it; not knowing it, you will not pay the honour and glory due to the sovereign goodness for having bestowed it upon you; neither will you by gratitude enrich the fund of piety within your own soul, but will

dry it up therein through much ignorance and ingratitude. For that which we see not, we know not; not knowing it, we love it not; not loving it, we can feel neither happy in it nor grateful to our Creator.

"We need light, my dear brother. It is so necessary for us that, if the soul knew in how great need it stands of light, it would choose rather to die than to love and seek after anything that could deprive it of the sweet and good light of which I speak.

"You will perhaps ask me, what can deprive you of this light. I answer you according to my poor understanding, that it is only a cloud of self-love and sensuality that can extinguish the light. Self-love is a tree of death, whose roots are in pride. Pride is born of self-love, and self-love of pride.

"The ministers whom the Sovereign Goodness has chosen to be His Christs ought to be Angels, not men; and they truly are Angels if they deprive not themselves of the light. They in truth discharge the office of Angels. The Angels serve each man according to the way prescribed to them by God. They are the Guardians given to us by the Sovereign Goodness. It is the same

of Priests placed by God in the mystical body of Holy Church to distribute to men the Body and the Blood of Jesus Crucified.

"Alas! my dear brother, he has been chosen as an Angel to be a worthy minister of the Body of the humble Lamb without spot, and he is a devil incarnate. He lives not like an ecclesiastic, who ought to live humbly with his Breviary for his Spouse, fulfilling his duties towards the poor, offering prayer for all men, and giving his goods to those in need, or consecrating them to the service of the Church. Instead of this he affects the manners and appearance of a man of the world, seeking honours, pleasure, and feasting. He is puffed up with pride and conceit. Nothing seems to satisfy him.

"The remedy for this is to shut ourselves up in the cell of self-knowledge, recognising our nothingness and God's goodness toward us; for He has given us our being and the graces we have received, and He is still patient with us. We shall thus get a hatred and disgust for our sensuality; and by means of this hatred we shall put self-love to flight.

"At the door of our cell we must place conscience as a watch-dog, to bark and warn us as soon as he

sees the enemy coming, that is, the thoughts that trouble our heart. And he must bark not only when dangerous thoughts appear, but when holy thoughts about good works present themselves, so that by the light of reason we may see whether these thoughts come really from God. Thus the city of our soul will always be in safety, and neither devil nor other creatures will be able to obtain possession of it.

"The beauty of the soul is preserved and increased by the light of reason, for she is thus freed from the cloud of self-love; otherwise the soul loses her beauty. These thoughts have led me to say that I desire to see you enlightened with the true and perfect light as to the dignity of the Priesthood. I desire that we should shake off the sleep of negligence, and practise virtues under the influence of the light, so as to live our life as angels upon earth, bathing in the blood of Jesus crucified, and hiding ourselves in His most sweet wounds."

And so we see that St. Catherine of Siena in her century, like St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi in hers, spoke of Priests as Christs, desiring above all things that they should have the light to see the dignity of the Office to which they have been raised.

CONFERENCE II.

THE MOTHER OF THE PRIEST.

EGO SERVUS TUUS, ET FILIUS ANCILLAE TUAE.
—*Ex communi Apostolorum.*

I am a Priest, Thy servant; and a son of Mary, Thy handmaid. The relationship between the Mother of Jesus and the Priest is that of mother and son. Let it be inseparable, intimate, life-long, as in the pattern shown us on the Mount of Calvary.

SECTION I.—THE PRIEST NEEDS A MOTHER.

If you have formed a worthy ideal of the Priesthood, you will need all a mother's love and encouragement to sustain your efforts to live up to that ideal. If you have made no special consecration of yourself to Mary since the date of your Ordination, hasten to do so now—and to do so with some preparation and solemnity. This should be done in the conviction that the Priesthood has an interest, a charm, and attraction for

Mary beyond every other profession or state of life; and that the infancy or early years of your sacerdotal life stand in special need of this Divine Mother's care.

It can hardly be necessary to point out that a young Priest will pass through a critical and dangerous period before he becomes consolidated in sacerdotal virtue. His very youth, his passions, his temptations, his inexperience, the subtle allurements and attractions of a new position, the struggles he must engage in to keep his soul faithful to prayer, pure, and unspotted from the world, are some of the trials through which he will have to pass, as through a furnace of fire, after ordination and emancipation from the routine and protection of seminary life. Much more than a Religious in his cloister, living under the close observance of superiors, does the young Priest, fresh from college, need the steadying influence of this faithful, loving Mother's care.

Your confidence in the power of Mary will be found rooted in the Christian economy of God's Providence. And it may be worth while, though at the risk of repeating what is already well known, to cast an eye once more on what the course of that Divine Providence has been.

The first of all God's works in the order of dignity and excellence was the Incarnation of the Word. It took first rank among the complaisancies of the ever Blessed Trinity. There lay in the bosom of God from eternity the vision of the Incarnate Son and His Blessed Mother, an object of Divine contemplation and delight before all ages. There, in the bosom of God, this mysterious vision dawned in time upon the intelligence of the angelic creation, a revelation even then "set up for the fall and for the resurrection of many." And clothed in what office, marked with what character, did this Son of Mary appear? A Priest, standing between the Creator and His creation, called by Tertullian the *Catholicus Patris Sacerdos.* A Priest offering a sacrifice of adoration and thanksgiving absolutely worthy of the Eternal Father; a Priest offering for a guilty world in His own blood a sacrifice of atonement and of prayer that cannot fail of acceptance; an Eternal Priest, an Eternal Victim, each of infinite worth. Such was the vision, and such by Divine dispensation was the Son of Mary.

Mary, on the other hand, was predestined, created, prepared by grace to be the worthy

Mother of this Divine and Eternal Priest. Unlike any other creature in heaven or on earth, because alone chosen to this unique and highest office imaginable.

A Paradise of great beauty and perfection had been created for the Angels. A Paradise was created for our first parents, a garden of delights proportioned to their nature. A Paradise was also created for the Incarnate Son of God—Mary most holy. It was measurable not by her physical limitations, but by the magnitude and multitude of her spiritual endowments. In the moment of her Immaculate Conception the germ of the fulness of every grace and virtue was laid within her. In the exquisite and entrancing beauty of her sanctity she approached nearer to God than any one that had ever come from His creative hand. She was a vast spiritual kingdom, a world of heavenly grace and loveliness, so spacious that the Word moved at ease within her realms of light, rejoicing in a Paradise which He had made worthy of Himself, the masterpiece of all creation.

Mary was far more to Jesus than an earthly tabernacle, more than a natural mother to bear and nurse Him. She was bound up with His life, and the lifelong companion of His sacerdotal

mission, from its beginning and ordination within her womb to its consummation in the Sacrifice of the Cross.

At the Annunciation the angel had declared that she was not only possessed of the fulness of grace, *gratiâ plena*, but that the Lord Himself was with her—*Dominus tecum*—an expression truly without significance had it only meant that He was with her as He is with all the souls of the just, or as He is everywhere present in creation. It meant that the Lord had become united to her by a new relationship, contracted with the Three Divine Persons, a relationship altogether singular and special to herself. A unique and personal alliance had been entered into, and God became related to Mary as a son to a mother.

No more intimate union is to be found than that between God and the soul of Mary, except only the union between the two natures in Christ, and the unity of the Three Divine Persons.

The consequences of this union of God with Mary are ever flowing as a river of wealth and refreshment, through the whole spiritual order of existence until they reach their ultimate results, of which we men are the enriched and

blessed gainers. God does not repent—*juravit Dominus et non poenitebit eum.* There is perfect harmony and correspondence in all His works. Mary is Queen of the Universe, while her Son is its Lord. She the happy Eve and Mother of the new creation, He its second Adam and its Father.

Section II.—Mary's Relation to the Priesthood.

Mary has given us both the Priest and the Victim of our salvation. When the Incarnate Word rested within her Tabernacle, in the first moment of the hypostatic union, He was anointed Priest by the Holy Ghost—this without the laying on of hands, the unction of oil, or any human ceremony. But within the holiest and most glorious Sanctuary ever reared for sacred rite or sacrifice, He became a Priest for ever, in order to accomplish the work for which He had become Incarnate.

Mary was that noblest of Temples, within which her Divine Son was anointed Priest.

At once, and as its first act, the blessed human soul of Jesus turned to the Majesty of God, and offered to Him the most profound acts of adora-

tion, thanksgiving, and love that have ever been offered to the Creator. And as that human soul gazed upon the Trinity, it was itself inundated with the full tide of the Beatific Vision. But it thirsted also for a human love, and this it received in the most satisfying abundance from the immaculate heart of His Blessed Mother, hallowed as she had been by the fulness of grace within her own soul.

From the first moment of His Incarnation He also beheld the human race, lost and buried in sin and forgetfulness of God, and bound in a thousand toils by Satan. He yearned to offer mankind once more to God in holiness and justice. He sought His Father's glory and man's happiness and salvation. He therefore took upon Himself the whole penalty of sin and the price of man's Redemption. With a Heart steeped in all our sorrows, and bearing all our iniquities, even from the beginning within His Mother's Womb, He stood forth as a Priest and Mediator between guilty man and the offended Majesty of God. The Victim of propitiation that He intended to offer was Himself.

In carrying out this great purpose, His chief solace and companion was to be Mary, His Mother.

To her He confided His design, gradually unfolding it before her mind and heart. From the first moment she had been in closer sympathy with Him than all Angels and Saints put together, because the heights of her wisdom, love, and sanctity only began where theirs have ended. The foundations of her sanctity were upon the holy mountains.

During the thirty years how deep and sensitive a communion of mind and heart went on, ever increasing in knowledge and love, between the Mother and the Son! With what intense earnestness and prayer she entered into the development of His scheme for teaching and redeeming the human race! In her He never met repulse or disappointment. During the three years of His sacred ministry she never was far away from His bodily presence, and in a multitude of spiritual ways she took even an active, though secret, part in the progress of His work through Palestine.

Finally she was near Him during His Passion, and in her proper place by the side of the Divine Priest as He offered the Divine Victim upon the altar of the cross. Through her knowledge of the Priest and His intentions, through her love and sympathy—the greatest possible—for her Divine

Son, through close association and conjunction of her soul with His in the work of the Redemption, she has obtained the singular and unique title of Co-redemptrix.

As to the future supply of ministers to carry on the work of the Priesthood, Jesus had already made provision. But He reserved to the supreme hour of His sacrifice on the Cross the bestowal upon Mary of the guardianship of His Priesthood.

Looking at His Mother and the Priest standing by her side, He said to her, "Behold thy Son," and after that He said to the Priest, "Behold thy Mother"—"and from that hour the disciple took her to his own."

It is precisely this that every young Priest, fresh like the disciple John from his ordination, should do. He should take Mary, the Mother of Jesus, to be his Mother, and he should take her to his own home.

If, then, you should be asked, "With whom are you going to live?" you should be able to answer at once, "With my Mother." Whether your lot is to be in a London presbytery, or under a tent in Central Africa, whether on home or foreign missions, take her to your own. You should say

from your heart: "I shall never leave her. In her company I shall never be sad or lonely. She being the Mistress of my abode, however rude and humble, I shall always be at home; and, being with her, I shall always be in safe keeping. From the long ago experience of her life with Jesus, in Africa, in Nazareth, in the active ministry, and in the Sacrifice on Calvary, she will know how to assist me in the discharge of all my sacerdotal duties, and especially in the dispositions required to offer up her Son in the Sacrifice of Holy Mass."

It is well known that Mary has a special love for those who are clothed with the Priesthood of her Son. It therefore depends upon us whether we shall avail ourselves of this love. Shall we take her to our own, or shall we pay her no more than the ordinary respect due to her sublime dignity? As no one, after Jesus, so ardently desires the salvation of souls, no one is more deeply interested in the sanctification of Priests than Mary.

The venerable servant of God quoted in the preceding Conference writes thus upon this subject:—

"I see that Mary has received from her Divine Son special grace and mission to form the heart of the Priest for the sacred functions of his sub-

lime office, and to obtain for him a constant renewal of the grace which maintains and develops the grace of the Priesthood—a grace which in its essence and in its effects is closely related to the grace with which Mary was filled at the moment of the Incarnation.

"This tender Mother burns with an immense love, a most ardent zeal for the souls of Priests, on account of the ties which bind them to Jesus."

Section III.—Suggested Practices of Devotion.

1. After ordination, dedicate yourself anew in a solemn manner to Mary in your character as a Priest. Place your sacerdotal life under her special care. In after years you will have cause to revert to this consecration with joy and gratitude.

2. Put her in possession of your room as your Queen and your Mother, by placing her picture or statue in a post of honour.

3. Read Blessed Grignon de Montfort's "Treatise on True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin." Use it for meditation. Go through it again and again, as years roll on. Recommend it to such as will appreciate it.

"Mary Magnifying God" is another work strongly to be recommended.

4. It will be very useful to commit to memory certain stanzas that are particularly full and suggestive, to use or meditate upon during the day.

For instance, these from the *Stabat Mater*:—

"Eia Mater fons amoris
Me sentire vim doloris
Fac ut tecum lugeam."

. . . . . .

or this:

"Fac ut ardeat cor meum,
In amando Christum Deum
Ut sibi complaceam,"

or

"Ut sacrum digne faciam."

Or again, take these from the *Ave Maris Stella*:—

"Solve vincla reis,
Profer lumen coecis,
Mala nostra pelle,
Bona cuncta posce.

. . . . . .

Monstra te esse Matrem,
Sumat per te preces,
Qui pro nobis natus,
Tulit esse tuus."

5. Needless to suggest the daily use of the Rosary to Priests from Mill Hill or any of our colleges But the "Heroic Act" and Blessed

Grignon de Montfort's "Act of Consecration" may be considered by each one.

Some Priests place as many Masses as they can at the entire disposal of the Blessed Virgin, as she knows better than we can how to apply them to the greater glory of God. We may at least ask her to take charge of our *Memento*, both for the Living and the Dead. We may always give her the special application to the souls in Purgatory of the fruit of the Mass, subject to any obligation we have contracted, and the satisfactory part of all our actions, remembering the great interest Mary feels in the holy souls, and her desire to relieve their sufferings.

CONFERENCE III.

THE ADORABLE TRINITY.

In his Paterna gloria,
In his triumphat Filius,
In his Voluntas Spiritus.
—*Ex communi Apostolorum.*

The object of these Conferences is to suggest considerations that may be useful to Priests who are drawing up their *schema vitae sacerdotalis.*

What more vital than an intimate knowledge of God!

Noverim Te, noverim me.

We must not be afraid of the mystery of the Blessed Trinity, or pass over it, because we have been familiar with an outline of the doctrine from childhood, or because it is incomprehensible. It is the great fundamental doctrine of faith, full of meaning, of light, and of sweetness.

There undoubtedly exist among many Catholics a spirit of frivolity and a love of novelty that lead them to pass over the great mysteries of religion for devotional practices that appeal more directly

to the senses. Such practices are useful when they draw the soul on to know and love the great doctrines of the Faith, but they are harmful when they occupy the mind and attention so as to banish into the background the divine truths, which are the proper food of the soul. Much injury has been done to souls, both within and without the Church, by a neglect of what is solid and fundamental. A frivolous, superstitious, and foolish type of religious character has been generated, lacking depth and strength, and alienating many from the Church, which they contemptuously say is a nursery for women and children.

Blessed Grignon de Montfort, in his "Treatise on True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin," speaks admirably on this subject.

The remedy for popular irregularities such as have been alluded to, is to be sought in the life and conduct of Priests who, in the words of St. Peter, *forma facti gregis ex animo;* and of whom the Council of Trent declares that *in eos, tanquam in speculum reliqui oculos conjiciunt, ex iisque sumunt quod imitentur.*

Section I.—Practical value to us of our Knowledge of the Trinity.

Now, in the spiritual life, no one can doubt the high place which devotion to the Adorable Trinity ought to occupy. We have but to observe the position of pre-eminence given to the sublime mystery by the Church in her Liturgy, in the Mass, the Office, and the administration of the Sacraments. Adoration, praise, and invocation of the Blessed Trinity are therein of constant recurrence. It is the basis on which all the services of the Church are grounded. There is not a religious exercise that does not begin and end with invocation of the Blessed Trinity, scarcely a prayer, a hymn, or a psalm that does not conclude with an act of adoration and praise of the Blessed Trinity.

There are many reasons why the thought of the Blessed Trinity should ever be near us, especially when in prayer.

First, there is an overwhelming sense of gratitude. We have been created to know God as well as to love and serve Him. Reason, indeed, can discover His existence from the things He has

created, but is utterly incapable of revealing to us, even in barest outline, the truths concerning Himself and His Eternal Life, which He has most mercifully and most bountifully revealed to us Himself.

Human reason may peer into the darkness of the night, may pierce the azure of the sky, but it can discover no trace of the inner Life and activity of God within Himself.

God alone, of His own pure love and goodness, has introduced us into this deeper knowledge of Himself. It is of Him we learn the plurality of Divine Persons living eternally in the unity of the Deity. It is God Himself who has assured us that He has dwelt, not as in the solitude of a hermit, from eternity, but in the society of three distinct Persons, intimately and substantially related to each other, in the fullest and most blissful intercourse, and in the joint possession of undivided and indivisible nature.

The knowledge of the divine fecundity in God, producing from eternity the Three Persons of the Trinity, shows us that to communicate Himself, His life, and His happiness, is of the very nature and essence of God.

The understanding of this prepares us to

accept the mystery of the Incarnation, which is God's plan for the communication of Himself *ad extra*. Thus the Incarnation would be wholly incomprehensible but for our knowledge of the Trinity. Through this knowledge we perceive that it is a continuation *ad extra* of the eternal birth of the Son of God—*ex utero ante luciferum genui Te*—and of His uncreated relationship to the Father and to the Holy Ghost.

The Incarnation is the external incorporation of the Second Person, called the Word and the Image of God, with our visible nature, and is God's revelation of Himself to mankind.

The Three Divine Persons who existed from eternity in relation to each other have thus in time, through the Incarnation, become related to us. But of this we could have had no conception had not God revealed to us the mystery of the Adorable Trinity.

Second, the beatitude of intelligent creatures consists in their knowledge as well as in their love and service of God. We are not, indeed, in our present state called upon to fathom to their depth the mysteries of revelation, for *he that is a searcher of majesty shall be overwhelmed with glory* (Prov. xxii.); but a moderate knowledge of these mysteries,

provided we humbly and lovingly adore them with a profound and lively faith, furnishes the basis of an ever increasing, of an ever deepening and expanding love. We know Him in part and in a dark manner, but quite sufficiently to plunge our whole being into the abyss of His intense and immeasurable love. Our present knowledge of the Trinity is the introductory preparation for the Beatific Vision, which will fill up the outlines of revelation with absolute perfection, and flood us with unspeakable delight.

Our personal acquaintance here below with the perfections appropriated to each of the Divine Persons gives us a knowledge of God which nothing else could supply.

We are, moreover, raised above ourselves to a higher order of life and hope, as we recognise within the mansion of the soul the actual presence of our Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier. We superabound in hope, and exultingly look forward to the day when the veils will be removed, and we shall behold our God face to face, in the company of those who *incessabili voce proclamant Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus.* Meanwhile, our knowledge of the Life of God *ad intra* helps us to complete our poor and frail worship of the Deity. By uniting

our imperfect worship with the Divine Life, Love, Worship and Praise ever going on within the Trinity, we are permitted to enter into the closest communion with God's innermost Life, and in a certain sense to share in His Divine Being and His Infinite Perfections.

Finally, the clearness and precision of our knowledge of God, consequent on the revelation to us of the mystery of the Trinity, enables us to refute many of the deistic and pantheistic theories which have been invented by man to account for what they could not otherwise explain.

Section II.—Devotion to this Divine Mystery.

The Saints have always cultivated a devotion, full of awe and reverence, towards the Blessed Trinity. St. Vincent of Paul trained the Fathers of the Mission to practise special devotion to this mystery; and he arranged with the Holy See that in the Bull of the Erection of his Congregation a rule should be inserted obliging all his Priests to be very particular in propagating among the people whom they should be sent to instruct and evangelise, a great veneration for the two great

mysteries of the Blessed Trinity and the Incarnation. He never would for a moment tolerate the idea that a mystery may be lightly passed over because it is incomprehensible. On the contrary, he held that the great fundamental and incomprehensible doctrines of the faith are to be constantly insisted on, and that they ought to elicit from us constant acts of Faith, Hope, and Charity, with the most profound sentiments of humility, reverence, and awe.

St. John of the Cross used to say a Votive Mass of the Blessed Trinity whenever the rubrics permitted. And upon being asked the reason, he would naïvely reply that it was "because the *Santissima Trinidad* is the greatest Saint in heaven!"

St. Francis Xavier's favourite ejaculation was, *O Most Holy Trinity!* While dying, he repeated these words over and over again, adding, *Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me;* and to Our Lady, *Show thyself a mother—Monstra te esse matrem.*

Some of the Saints have had such intense devotion to this august mystery, that their bodies have been miraculously impressed with marks or emblems of the Trinity, as was the case with St. Clare of Montefalco, in whose heart were

discovered after her death physical emblems of the Adorable Trinity, which are to be seen to this day.

St. Teresa, while most devout to the Sacred Humanity of our Lord, used to teach that to know and contemplate the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity is most advantageous to the soul. And she herself was frequently favoured by a perception of the presence of the Three Divine Persons within her own soul. She thus obtained by experimental knowledge an understanding of the promise made to all by Our Blessed Lord, when He said that if we love Him and keep His commandments, the Three Divine Persons of the Trinity will come into our soul and therein abide. St. Teresa perceived within her soul the presence of this company at some times more vividly than at others. It was with her, she said, as it is with us when there are two or more persons with us in a room. If the light shines through the window we behold them distinctly. But if the shutters be closed, and the room reduced to absolute darkness, we no longer see them, though we may still possess a sense and knowledge of their presence. We have not power over the light, she adds; God only, who can give it to us as He pleases. But

the presence of the Blessed Trinity within the soul we may always know, by faith in the Divine promises, and we can always therein adore and praise Him.

Section III.—Practices in Honour of the Blessed Trinity.

"O deep, O sweet, O calm and peaceful Trinity,
Prostrate in awe and reverence, I adore Thee!
O Infinite Power, Infinite Wisdom, Infinite Love,
Prostrate in humility and love, I adore Thee!
O fountain of life, of goodness, and of love,
My first beginning, and my last end,
Grant that, while remaining myself, I may be absorbed
in Thy blissful life for all eternity.
I love to stand alone before Thee, O Blessed Trinity
And to say, Tibi laus, Tibi honor, Tibi gloria,
Tibi gratiarum actio in saecula saeculorum,
O Beata Trinitas."

It is a good practice before you rise from bed to kiss every morning the Five Precious Wounds of the Crucifix, while devoutly reciting the Doxology in honour of the Blessed Trinity. In saying Mass and the Breviary, dwell with intense reverence and devotion on all references to the Trinity, wheresoever they occur. In the Office of Apostles they occur in no less than seventy-five places.

At least from time to time say a Votive Mass of the Blessed Trinity, as St. John of the Cross used to do, resting with special awe and devotion on the words of the Introit, and on the other proper parts of the Mass, which are exceedingly beautiful.

To preach on devotion to this Adorable Mystery, give the Doxology as a sacramental penance; when you have authority to select the hymns to be sung in popular devotions, see that Father Faber's impressive hymn to the Blessed Trinity be learnt and sung by the congregation.

In opening business meetings at which you may preside, make slowly and reverently the sign of the Cross, invoking at the same time, in a loud voice, the Blessed Trinity. This is better than an attempt to kneel and say a longer prayer, for which people at such a time are but little prepared. How good and instructive was the custom of the early Christians, who were in a constant habit, upon all occasions, of making the sign of the Cross, and invoking the Blessed Trinity.

CONFERENCE IV.

GOD OUR FATHER.

PATER NOSTER, QUI ES IN COELIS.
—*Ex communi Apostolorum.*

A PRIEST'S character largely depends upon his habitual attitude of mind towards God. Many believers think of God as the Almighty who creates, kills, and judges—tempering awful justice with some consideration for human weakness, so that they are able to hope that the issue will eventually work out not unfavourably to their happiness.

How different is the conception of God given to us by God Himself!

The Scripture declares that the object of the Incarnation was to make us "sons of God," and therefore to make "God our Father." "As many as received Him He gave them power to be made the sons of God" (John i.). "GOD SENT HIS SON . . . THAT WE MIGHT HAVE THE ADOPTION OF SONS" (Gal. iv.).

The sonship spoken of in the New Testament differs from the sonship common to all men who

have been created to the image of God. It is a sonship of the supernatural order, with such participation in the Divine nature as is possible to a creature.

"Behold what manner of charity the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called, and should be, the sons of God. Dearly beloved, we are now the sons of God" (1 John iii.).

"Blessed be the God and Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath predestinated us unto the adoption of children unto Himself, according to the purpose of His will" (Eph. i.).

"Whoever are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. You have received the spirit of adoption of sons, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit Himself giveth testimony to our spirit, that we are the sons of God; and, if sons, heirs also" (Rom. viii.).

And again:

"God sent His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons; and because we are sons, God hath sent the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Therefore now he is not a servant, but a son. And if a son, an heir also through God" (Gal. iv.).

Our Lord taught nothing more plainly or more repeatedly than this—that we are to regard God habitually with the confidence and affection due to a Father. It was His special office to lead men to His Father. "No man cometh to the Father but by Me" (John xiv.). "Neither doth any man know the Father, but the Son and he to whom it shall please Me to reveal Him" (Matt. xi.).

He took away all inordinate fear of Our Father from our hearts by assuring us that the Father will not be our judge. On the contrary, He is the author of life and of happiness. "He raiseth up the dead and giveth life. . . . Neither doth the Father judge any man; but He hath given all judgment to the Son" (John v.). He is generosity itself, so that He grants all our petitions: "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name, He may give it to you" (John xv.). "The Father Himself loveth you, because you have loved Me" (John xvii.).

See how the Life and Teaching of Our Lord are bound up with the doctrine of the Divine Paternity. His first words recorded in the Gospel, His last words on the Cross, His first words after His Resurrection, and His last words before His Ascension are about His Father. "Did ye not know

that I must be about My Father's business?" (Luke ii.). "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit" (Luke xxiii.). "I ascend to My Father and your Father" (John xx.). "Wait for the promise of the Father" (Acts i.).

The whole of His teaching was centred in the doctrine that we must regard God as our Father.

If He taught His disciples to pray, it was to God as their Father: "Our Father, who art in heaven," &c. All the virtues they were to practise connected them directly with God as a Father.

Forgive, as your heavenly Father forgives, &c.

Pray in secret, because your heavenly Father seeth in secret.

Fast, not to be praised by men, but because your heavenly Father will reward you.

Give alms in secret, because your heavenly Father seeth in secret. "If ye being evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father, who is in heaven, give good gifts to them that ask Him?" (Matt. vii.).

Love your enemy, do good to them that persecute you, that ye may be the children of your Father who is in heaven.

Be not solicitous for your life, for your clothing, because your Father knoweth that you have need

of all these things. If God provides for the birds of the air, much more will your Father who is in heaven take care of you.

He loves children. "It is not the will of your Father, who is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish. Their angels always see the face of My Father" (Matt. xviii.).

When persecuted and given up, the Spirit of your Father shall speak in you.

The reward for doing Our Father's will: "Whosoever shall do the will of My Father, that is in heaven, he is My brother, and sister, and mother."

He is wholly our Father: "Call no man Father upon earth, one is your Father who is in heaven."

Come ye blessed of My Father, possess the kingdom that is prepared for you.

The just shall shine as the sun in the *kingdom of their Father.*

Our Lord's promises depend on our praying to the Father: "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name, this will I do."

The thought of God as a Father was never absent from His works or words.

"Make not the house of My Father a house of traffic."

"The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into His hand."

"I confess to Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou hast hidden these things from the wise and the prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones."

"My Father worketh until now, and I work."

The Jews sought to kill Him because He "said God was His Father, making Himself equal to God" (John v.).

"I am come in the name of My Father, and ye receive Me not" (John v.).

"My Father giveth you bread from heaven."

"This is the will of My Father, that every one . . . may have everlasting life" (John vi.).

"No man can come unto Me unless the Father, who sent Me, draw him."

"No man hath seen the Father, but He who is God."

"As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father."

"And they understood not that He called God His Father" (John viii.).

"Honour My Father. It is My Father that glorified Me" (John viii.).

"The works that I do in the name of My Father, they give testimony of Me" (John viii.).

"I and the Father are one."

"If I do not the works of My Father, believe Me not."

"The Father is in Me, and I in the Father."

"Father, I give Thee thanks that Thou hast heard Me" (John xi.).

"Father, save Me from this hour" (John xii.).

"Father, glorify Thy name."

"Knowing that His hour was come that He should pass out of this world to His Father, knowing that the Father had given Him all things into His hands, He riseth from supper," &c. (John xiii.).

"In My Father's house there are many mansions."

"Philip, he who seeth Me, seeth the Father."

"Do ye not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me?"

"I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Paraclete, that He may abide with you."

"As the Father hath loved Me, I also have loved you."

"Glorify Thou Me, O Father, with Thyself."

"Holy Father, keep them in Thy name. That

they all may be one, as Thou, Father, in Me, and I in Thee; that they also may be one in us."

"Father, I will that where I am they also may be with Me."

"Just Father, the world hath not known Thee."

"I have made Thy name known to them, and will make it known."

"My Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from Me."

"My Father, if this chalice cannot pass from Me, Thy will be done."

"Thinkest thou that I cannot ask My Father and He will presently give Me more than twelve legions of angels?"

"Father, forgive them, they know not what they do."

"Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit."

And it was the same after His resurrection:—

"I have not yet ascended to My Father; tell them that I ascend to My Father and their Father."

"As the Father hath sent Me, so I send you."

Our Blessed Lord, when His work was accomplished, could therefore truly say, "Father, I have

manifested Thy name to the men whom Thou hast given Me out of the world" (John xvii.). He had made God known as a FATHER; and the Apostles in their Epistles, and the Church in her teaching, have taken up the joyful note that God is to us indeed a Father.

The tender parental affection felt by God Our Father for those who seek to live to Him as sons, under the new law, is set forth by the great Prophet of the Incarnation in most vivid and touching figures:—

"Shall not I that make others bring forth children, myself bring forth? Shall I that gave generations to others be barren, saith the Lord.

"Ye shall be carried at the breasts, and upon the knees they shall rock and caress you. As one whom the mother caresseth, so will I comfort you, and you shall be comforted."

And again:

"Hearken to Me thou who art carried by My bowels, art borne by My womb. Even to your old age I am the same, and to your grey hairs I will carry you. I have made you, and I will bear. I will carry, and will save you."

And again:

"Can a woman forget her infant so as not to

have pity on the son of her womb? And if she should forget, yet will not I forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee on My hands" (Isaias xlvi., xlix., lxvi.).

As the first words of the Creed are, "I believe in *God the Father:*" so the first words of our daily prayer are, "*Our Father*, who art in heaven." Can anything more be said, can any further argument be adduced to persuade us to treat with God as a Father? He is our Father, we are His children.

The Apostolic man who lives in this habitual conviction will become of so tender and considerate a heart that he will insensibly win extraordinary influence over souls. When he is himself addressed as "Father," his mind will rise to Him "of whom all paternity is named." His dealings with the poor, the ignorant, and with sinners will be gentle, kind, and sympathetic, because he will never forget that all are children of one Father. How often the heart of a sinner may be led by this consideration to say, "I will arise and go to my Father"! How often those who are crushed by grief, who are wild in their despair, who are suddenly stunned by the feeling that now they stand alone in the world for the first time, that

all that they loved and trusted has been snatched away from them for ever—how often such as these may be calmed, consoled, and finally sanctified by the discovery that after all and above all God Himself is their Father, and Heaven is their Home!

CONFERENCE V.

LOVE OF THE INCARNATE WORD.

MAJOREM CARITATEM NEMO HABET UT ANIMAM SUAM PONAT QUIS PRO AMICIS SUIS.

—*Ex communi Apostolorum.*

GOD'S love for us was the greatest in kind and in degree ever known or imagined. His death is the proof.

Majorem caritatem nemo habet ut animam suam ponat quis pro amicis suis.

And again:

Dilexit me et tradidit semetipsum pro me.

In order to die for us the Word was made Flesh. In no other way could God have suffered or died.

The thought of the infinite love of God for each one of us, and of all that He endured for our sake, ought never to be long absent from our mind. We ought to be overwhelmingly in love with the Word made Flesh, and our whole life should be absolutely wrapt up in His love and service, so as to be able to think of nothing else;

or if we do, in the first free moment we should turn to Him as the magnet to the pole.

Section I.—Apostolic Examples for Apostolic Men: St. Peter.

Picture to yourself St. Peter. With weather-beaten face, bloodshot eyes, cheeks furrowed by continual weeping, and a strong human heart ever throbbing with love and contrition, he speaks to every one, and everywhere, of the Life and Passion of His Divine Master.

Here are some of his sayings and instructions:—

"Christ suffered for us, leaving you an example that ye should follow His steps."

"Sanctify the Lord Jesus in your hearts."

"That in all things God may be honoured through Jesus Christ, to whom is glory and empire, for ever and ever. Amen."

"I am myself an ancient and a witness of the sufferings of Christ."

"Let all the house of Israel know most certainly that God hath made, both Lord and Christ, this same Jesus, whom you have crucified."

"The God of our fathers hath glorified His Son Jesus . . . but ye denied the Holy One and the

Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you. But the author of life ye killed, whom God hath raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses."

"Be it known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the Name of Our Lord Jesus Christ of Nazareth whom ye crucified, whom God hath raised from the dead, even by Him this man standeth here before you whole. Neither is there salvation in any other. For there is no other name under heaven given to men whereby we must be saved."

"The God of our fathers hath raised up Jesus, whom ye put to death, hanging Him upon a tree. Him hath God exalted with His right hand, to be Prince and Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins."

The Scripture tells us that Peter and the Apostles never tired, but continually spoke of Christ and His doctrine.

"And EVERY DAY THEY CEASED NOT, in the temple, and from house to house, TO TEACH AND PREACH CHRIST JESUS."

The heart of Blessed Peter and the Apostles was brimming over with no ordinary love for their crucified Lord. Their love was a fire, a

fire of love, kindled by the Holy Ghost Himself. It burnt within them, and forced its way through their words and conduct into the hearts of men.

Here, then, oh ye young Priests, sent as Apostles to the heathen abroad, sent as Apostles to a population that has lapsed from the faith at home, here are your patrons, here your models. Be ye in your souls on fire, if ye would kindle the fire of divine love in the hearts of men.

Section II.—St. Paul.

The Apostle Paul teaches the same lesson. He is filled with Christ.

Everywhere he proclaims himself to be "*the slave*," ὁ δουλος—not the servant or freeman, but "the slave of Christ," irrevocably and absolutely bound by his own act to the service of this Divine Master. This was his highest title and the patent of his nobility.

His daily and continuous instruction was—"to die with Christ"; to be "buried with Christ"; "to rise with Christ"; "to put on Christ"; "to live with Christ."—"Christ is your life."

"Mind the things that are above, not the things

that are upon the earth; for ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God."

"All things do ye in the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ."

"I count all things to be but as loss for the excellent knowledge of Jesus Christ, my Lord."

"I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but as dung that I may gain Christ."

"God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified to me, and I to the world."

"I judge not myself to know anything among you but Jesus Christ, and Him crucified."

"With Christ I am nailed to the Cross. I live now; not I, but Christ liveth in me."

"I bear the marks of the Lord Jesus in my body."

"Christ is all in all."

"I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me."

In sweeping and uncompromising language of this kind he raised aloft the Apostolic standard of life, and deliberately pressed it upon all his hearers. They were all to aim at being with Christ; nothing less. They were each one to do

their best to reach the mark. Each was to train himself, as one to run in a race, or to enter the arena, for a contest.

Again and again in writing to the Corinthians, to the Ephesians, to the Philippians, to the Thessalonians, and the Hebrews, St. Paul repeats the injunction, *Imitatores mei estote*, in these or similar words. There can, therefore, be no doubt as to the life of an Apostolic man. It is to become one with Jesus Christ, and with Him crucified.

The Fathers, Doctors, and Saints of the Church in every age teach the same. Their language may pale beside that of the Apostles, but the doctrine is always the same: that we must rise to the love of God and to union with Him, *through* Jesus Christ our Lord; that we must learn the breadth and height, and length and depth, of the love of God for us, by the study of His Passion and Death.

Section III.—Teaching of the Church.

To be brief, let me sum up the teaching of the Church to-day in a sentence of St. Francis of Sales, taken from his "Treatise on the Love of God":—

"The Passion of Our Lord is the sweetest and most constraining motive that can animate our hearts in this mortal life. Mount Calvary is the mount of lovers. All love that takes not its beginning from Our Saviour's Passion is frivolous and dangerous."

And he draws out the thought of our individual indebtedness to God as follows:—

"God suffered for all in general, but in particular for me, who am a chief among sinners. *He hath loved me;* yea, I say, He hath loved even me. Even me, such as I am, and *delivered Himself* to His Passion *for me.*

"We must consider the Divine benefits in their first and eternal source. This is the infinite goodness of our Creator, who from eternity determined to create, preserve, govern, redeem, save, and glorify all in general and each in particular. He designed the hour of my birth, of my baptism, of all the inspirations that He would bestow upon me; in a word, of all the benefits He would provide for me. Is there sweetness like unto this sweetness?

"We must next consider the Divine benefits in their second and meritorious source. The soul of Our Saviour, from the instant of His conception,

knew us all by name and by surname; but above all in the day of His Passion, when He offered His tears, His prayers, His blood, and His life for all. He then breathed in particular for *thee* these thoughts of love: 'Ah, my Eternal Father, I take to Myself and charge Myself with all poor Theotime's sins, and undergo torments and death that he may be freed from them, that he may not perish, but may live. Let Me die, so he may live; let Me be crucified, so he may be glorified.' O sovereign love of the Heart of Jesus, what heart can bless and praise Thee as it ought!"

Section IV.—Temptation to Compromise.

The fact is that the Apostles and the Saints were mad with the love of Jesus Christ. Such love is condemned by the despicable and contemptible maxims of the world as exaggerated and insane. But too late will the worshippers of this world discover their error. In the flames of hell are heard the useless mourning of self-reproach. *Nos insensati!*—we fools!—*Vitam illorum estimabamus insaniam el finem illorum sine honore; ecce quomodo computati sunt inter filios Dei et enter Sanctos sors illorum est.*

You cannot love your God too intensely, too generously, too exclusively. "Put forth all your strength, and be not weary; for you never can go far enough" (Eccl. xliii.). The measure with which to love Him is to love Him without measure.

The world, the flesh, and the devil agree upon one thing, viz. to urge upon us prudence, moderation in the love of God, and consideration for their claims. You cannot live without us, they say; our baubles, pleasures, pomps, pride, and wealth are necessary to you. Divide your affections between God and us, and we shall honour you. See how this is done by a multitude of most respectable persons: they enjoy both worlds. God cannot want all your heart, all your strength, all your life. You can't pretend to be better than others. Compromise matters, and divide yourself between the Creator and the creature!

How often will even the Priest be tempted to listen to the insinuations of human prudence and worldly wisdom, and put aside the interests of God to win a smile from the world; or to enjoy a companionship, a pleasure, an amusement, under which may lurk a subtle poison that may lead to death!

It seems to me to be a very poor compliment to Our Lord to be making continual compromises with His enemies, or to adopt an apologetic and deprecatory line with the world, when we ought boldly to love and serve Him in preference to all else beside, and to let men see that we are not ashamed of the Gospel; *Non enim erubesco Evangelium* (Rom. i. 16).

I have always relished the advice given by St. Francis Xavier to one of his missioners in India who had much to do with certain self-seeking and worldly Catholics.

"In these persons," he says, "I have detected the most imperfect sense of their spiritual miseries. They scatter your words to the winds, if they refer to the sanctification of the soul and to the hope of a future life. They are attached to the earth, and so will remain. They savour altogether of earthly things. Have no fear of the criticisms of such people; never hope to come to a compromise with them. Your words and aims run in contrary directions; they belong to the world, you to the kingdom of Jesus Christ. Should not a soldier of Christ blush to dread their complaints and criticisms? Should he not be deaf and insensible to the judgments of men

who prefer earth to heaven? Follow Our Lord, to whom you are bound by vow, and despise the murmurs of men who belong to the opposite camp. I say more: be careful that these men never see in you any fear of their hostile talk. Bear yourself boldly, so that all may understand that you neither value the praise of these worldly men, nor fear their blame."

Section V.—How to Rivet the Heart on God.

You may say, these thoughts are true, but who can carry them always in his mind? The occupations and distractions of each day are bound, by a law of nature, to banish them from the heart. Here comes in the need of industries to counteract the tendency of nature.

A useful memento of this kind is a crucifix. Carry on your person a crucifix, not so small as to lie unperceived, but from six to ten inches long, so strongly made as not to break with the weight of the body, and suspended from the neck by a chain. If the chain be attached to the lower end of the cross it will be easy to hold up the crucifix before your eyes when alone. It should be worn

under your clothing, and be a constant companion night and day. The chain will serve as a discipline, always at hand, whenever you wish to commemorate Our Lord's scourging at the pillar; for instance on Fridays, and other nights in the week.

It is a great matter to become attached to your crucifix—to commune familiarly with it, to cover the precious wounds with devout and humble kisses, to live with your crucified Lord, and to die with Him.

Every morning, before you rise, kiss each of the wounds, and say a *Gloria Patri* and the ejaculation, "Blessed and praised for evermore be Jesus, who has saved us by His Blood."[1] This is to begin the day by adorning the bleeding wounds with gems and jewels of love.

The contemplation of the crucifix should be a constant occupation, if we desire to be set on fire with Divine love. Flames of love dart forth from every wound. *Amor crucifixus, Amor crucifixus,* and yet "Love is not loved"—"not loved," only because not known.

Look at Him, in the beauty and perfection of His manhood, in the infinite goodness and love of His divinity, dying on the cross.

[1] See page 63.

Dilectus meus candidus, et rubicundus, et totus desiderabilis ;

Omnis enim figura ejus amorem spirat,

Et ad redamandum provocat caput inclinatum, Manus expansae, Pectus apertum.

Piis, O Virgo, Spectas eum oculis, contemplans in Eo non tam vulnerum livorem, quam mundi salus.

Ponder each of these words.

It is more profitable to feast the soul upon details than upon general considerations. Take, for instance, the precious blood, the actual price paid for our redemption—*Redemisti nos, Domine, in sanguine tuo.*

His life was in the blood; our life also is in His blood. The dear and precious blood of Jesus was pressed out by force of grief from every pore, in the agony of the garden—"He trod the wine-press alone"—it was drawn from every livid wound and ghastly gash by cruel hands armed with whips, thongs, and thorns. The blessed hands and feet dripped blood during the last three hours while He hung between life and death.

The heart, crushed, broken, and finally pierced, poured forth its copious stream upon the guilty earth, soon after His spirit had departed.

That blood cleanses, vivifies, strengthens, sanctifies. It is absolutely and entirely the property of every soul that lays claim to it.

Enter into the Wounds of the Feet that have been wearied to death in pursuit of you: *Quaerens me sedisti lassus,* upon this last cruel bed of the Cross.

Enter into the Wounds of the gentle Hands that have so often raised and blessed you. *Manus ejus tornatiles clavorum cuspide terebratae, humanae salutis quasi hyacinthis refertae.* Though pierced with iron, they still retain within their grasp all the treasures of heaven. Therein is laid up superhuman strength—the strength which you need, and which He desires in death to bestow upon you, in order that you may succeed fully in your Apostolic career. *Cornua in manibus ejus; ibi abscondita est fortitudo ejus, sunt enim manus ejus.*

Enter above all through the open door in His side, and find your place in the Sacred Heart. Thought of you, anxiety for you, sorrow for your sins, love for you, made there an actual impression in His Heart—yes, a real impression—long before your little being was created and saw the light. Claim your place, seek your home, in His most generous and loving Heart.

In the Office of the Apostles, on which we are commenting, we are expressly sent by the Church to the Sacred Heart,—*Discite a Me quia mitis sum et humilis corde, et invenietis requiem animabus vestris.* No men in the whole world need, as Apostolic men need, to learn the mysteries hidden under the symbol of the Heart. Having studied, having deeply drunk therein, their souls will find restful, peaceful happiness. Their souls will melt as wax in the fire of His great love, and become one with the spirit of Jesus. This is, indeed, and above all else, the true Apostolic school.

Quis non redemptus diligat,
Et corde in isto seligat
Aeterna Tabernacula?

Vere dolores nostros Ipse tulit,
Et dolores nostros Ipse portavit.

Finally, this Heart is the fountain source of the Most Precious Blood, the price of our redemption. Plunge your soul into this fountain. "Cover yourself, clothe yourself" (says St. Catherine of Siena) "with the Blood. Be filled and inebriated with this sweet Blood. It will fill you with light and grace, it will adorn you with wisdom. It will be your very life. I desire you always to be

plunged in the Most Precious Blood of the sweet Lamb."

This devotion to the Precious Blood and the Five Bleeding Wounds I would invite all Apostolic men to cultivate in England in a very special way, because it is one of the old English devotions that by their own power and vitality have survived the religious wreck of the sixteenth century, and is still understood by the heart of the English people. An appreciative love for the Precious Blood is a strong bond uniting masses of the poor to Jesus Christ and to the doctrine of redemption, and it ought to be religiously strengthened by the Catholic Church.[1] The Westminster Cathedral is dedicated to the Most Precious Blood.

Finally, be persuaded that a strong and generous love for Jesus Christ is essential to an Apostolic man. The Apostolic spirit cannot exist without it. Thus the Apostles obtained it on the day of Pentecost. The Holy Ghost desires to fill you with the same love.

Say not, I am not called to an absorbing love.

[1] Even the *Salvation Army* appeals to and invokes "the Blood," and "the Fire"—that is, the Most Precious Blood and the Holy Ghost, thus perpetuating belief in two great Catholic doctrines, Redemption and Sanctification.

Si non es vocatus, fac ut voceris. You have brains and heart, you have faith and charity. The way to acquire this love is open to all. Read, reflect, meditate. *Intellectus cogitabundus est principium omnis boni.* "With [spiritual] desolation is the whole world made desolate, because no man thinketh in his heart"—*quia nullus est qui recogitet in corde.* Jesus Christ, through His Spirit, bids us bear Him well in remembrance. "Remember thy poverty and transgression, the wormwood and the gall." And the man of God replies: "I will be mindful and remember, and my soul shall languish within me. These things I shall think over in my heart; therefore will I hope." Prepare your soul by prayer and contemplation, and the Divine Spirit of love will assuredly enter into you.

"But," some one will urge, "I have not time; I have too much on hand." "If thou wilt withdraw from superfluous talking, and idle visiting, and from giving ear to news and idle rumours, thou wilt find time sufficient and proper to spend in good meditations" (*Imit.*, Bk. I.).

The experience, for instance, of Bishops and of active men of business, who are obliged to read a daily paper, shows that the paper may be skimmed

and the points concerning them mastered in a very few minutes. But there are others, having no such obligation to keep an eye on the press, who waste hours and hours spelling through profitless columns of several daily papers.

But it will be remarked by others that "the purely religious considerations that have been referred to are dry and uninteresting." This is true where the service of God is half-hearted and against the grain. The attempt to serve two masters must break down — and it must break down on the side of least resistance.

On the other hand, *Cum inhaeresco tibi ex omni me, nusquam erit mihi dolor et labor.* Or, as another Saint has put it, *Ama et totus ama. Amor totus et totalis; amor unus et indivisus.*

Nothing but love will make possible a generous service. Nothing but love can banish languor, coldness, and tedium. "A great thing is love, a great good every way, which alone lighteneth all that is burdensome, and beareth equally all that is unequal. . . . The lover fleeth, runneth, and rejoiceth; he is free, and cannot be restrained. He giveth all for all, and hath all in all, because he resteth in one Sovereign Good above all. . . . Enlarge Thou me in love, that I may learn to taste

with the interior mouth of the heart how sweet it is to love, and to be dissolved, and to bathe in love. . . . When a man seeketh himself, he falleth away from love" (*Imit.*, Bk. II.).

If hesitation and fear dog your steps, fly to your Mother; never tire saying:—

"Eia Mater, fons amoris,
Me sentire vim dolores,
Fac ut tecum lugeam.

Fac ut ardeat cor meum,
In amando Christum Deum,
Ut sibi complaceam.

Sancta Mater, istud agas,
Crucifixi fige plagas,
Cordi meo valide."

CONFERENCE VI.

THE APOSTOLIC STANDARD.

VOS ESTIS CIVES SANCTORUM ET DOMESTICI DEI, SUPER EDIFICATI SUPER FUNDAMENTUM APOSTOLORUM.

—*Ex communi Apostolorum.*

A STANDARD is the distinctive ensign of a body of men, or of a cause. It is also the measure of the height or excellence that a man strives to attain; the mark at which he aims; the rule by which he judges his life and conduct.

Every one, consciously or unconsciously, has a standard; and such is human nature, that no one rises above his standard, but usually falls below it.

There are facts, truths, and lights, that a man with a high standard will rise to at once, which are unintelligible to one with a lower standard. A person placed on a height has a clearer view and a wider horizon than one standing on an inferior level.

On the whole, nothing tells more on life and

character than the formation by the mind of a high and true standard. Though a man fall miserably below it in conduct, he is in a far more hopeful condition than were he to lower his standard to his conduct. The intellect, by clearly enunciating high principles, perpetually rebukes, calls back, and corrects the weakness or aberration of the will, and thus remains the strong ally of grace. It is fortunate that while one half of the soul has fallen, the other should remain erect. It is better, therefore, to be "a man of desires," and of high principle, with occasional falls and relapses, than a consistent advocate of a low standard.

The general character of the Priesthood has been sufficiently described in the Second Conference. What we here maintain is, that your vocation as Missionary Priest gives you the Apostolic standard, and no other, for your rule of life and conduct.

There are persons who object to this, and argue that, having discharged what they call their professional duties, Priests are free, like members of other professions, to throw aside all restraint, to put off the Roman collar, and other insignia of the Priesthood, and enjoy themselves like laymen. We take social rank, they say, with the physician

and the lawyer; why not, when off duty, do as they do?

They forget that a Priest is never off duty. His light must burn day and night before men. The Church always claims him. He is always a churchman. And the Council of Trent sets forth his obligations in these words: *Sic decet omnino clericos in sortem Domini vocatos, vitam, moresque suos omnes componere, ut habitu, gestu incessu, sermone, aliisque omnibus rebus, nil nisi grave, moderatum ac religione plenum prae se ferant; levia etiam delicta, quae in ipsis maxima essent, effugiant, ut eorum actiones cunctis afferant venerationem.*[1]

The Priest is, at all times and in all circumstances, "the Christ." St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi never spoke of a Priest by any other title than "the Christ." He, least of all men, can serve two masters, or follow two different standards of life.

It stands to reason that if a Priest is to be "the salt of the earth," "the light of the world," he must be something altogether different from the

[1] Sessio xxii. c. i. The following is the first chapter of the Council of Trent on Ecclesiastical Life; and every sentence in it should be familiar to Priests, and reduced to practice.

earth, and apart from the world, which is in darkness. He stands separated from all classes of men. It is for him to change them, not for them to change him.

We must imitate the Apostles. In the words of St. Paul: *Imitatores mei estote sicut et ego Christi;* and here is the rule or standard he prescribes: "Let the mind be in you what was in Christ Jesus." The same thoughts, the same judgment, the same principles, the same standard of conduct that were visible to men in Christ Jesus, our Divine model, are to be our rule of life. This indeed is a high standard, and we shall never reach it, though we must aim at it. Of old it was said, "Walk before Me and be perfect"; this was to be the desire and the aim. It is always *sursum corda.*

The first lesson in the Office of Apostles bids us always appear before men as the Ministers of Christ. *Sic nos existimet homo ut ministros Christi et dispensatores mysteriorum Dei.* Men are to be taught to account us, to value and take us, simply as Ministers of Christ. As to this the Apostle was emphatic; though, as to men's opinion on other matters, he added, "It is a very small thing for me to be judged by you or by public opinion."

The teaching of the Church in all her liturgical books is the same.

In the Ordination service the Ordinandi are instructed that they are about to be ordained Priests, *in adjutorium duodecim apostolorum, Episcoporum videlicet Catholicorum.* They are to become related to the Apostolate by sharing in the Apostolate, and therefore by working under the Apostolic standard.

They are further instructed that—

Ministros Ecclesiae suae fide et opere debere esse perfectos, seu geminae dilectionis, Dei scilicet et proximi virtute fundatos.

Priests are *fide perfecti* when their thoughts, judgments, and convictions are in perfect conformity with the doctrines of Faith. This living Faith is as necessary a condition for the work of the Priesthood as fresh air is for the action of the lungs.

They are *opere perfecti* when their skill and energies are employed in propagating the truths of Faith and in labouring to the utmost of their power, inspired and urged on by their love for God and for their neighbour. *Geminae dilectionis, Dei scilicet et proximi virtute fundatos.*

The Apostolic standard, therefore, is a living,

active Faith, carrying on all manner of good works for God's honour and glory, and for the salvation of souls.

If England is ever to be reconverted to the Church, if unevangelised races are to be brought into the fold, we must raise up missioners perfect in Faith and good works, and on fire with the love of God and of their neighbour. These will be Apostolic men, dead to self, and all alive to the interests of Jesus Christ. But, alas! in the words of the Apostle, *omnes quaerunt quae sua sunt, non quae Jesu Christi.* The exception to this self-seeking is to be found in those men who heartily embraced and strove to live by the Apostolic standard, such as Augustine, Wilfrid, Boniface, Xavier, De Sales, Vincent of Paul, John Baptist de Rossi, the Curé d'Ars, and many others.

Each sentence in the Ordination prayer offered up by the consecrating Bishop deserves to be carefully analysed and meditated on, as setting forth the life that every Priest is called upon seriously to aim at attaining.

Tu, Domine, super hos famulos tuos, quos ad presbyterii honorem dedicamus, munus tuae benedictionis infunde; Ut gravitate actuum et censura vivendi probent se seniores, his instituti

disciplinis, quas Tito et Timotheo Paulus exposuit;

Ut in lege tua, die ac nocte meditantes, quod legerint credant, quod crediderint, doceant, quod docuerint, imitentur; justitiam, constantiam, misericordiam, fortitudinem ceterasque virtutes in se ostendant;

Exemplo præeant, admonitione confirment, ac purum et immaculatum ministerii sui donum custodiant; . . . . . .

Et inviolabili caritate in virum perfectum, in mensuram ætatis plenitudinis Christi, in die justi et æterni judicii Dei, conscientia pura, fide vera, Spiritu Sancto pleni, resurgant.

The lesson taught us in the Breviary Office of Apostles is the same in other words: "Ye are no longer guests and strangers who come and go: ye are fellow-citizens of the great saints and of the servants of God engaged in His personal and intimate service. Ye are built upon the Apostolic foundation, and your life must therefore correspond and square with that of the Apostles. Jesus Christ Himself is their and your model, and your strength, because of this Apostolic foundation He is the chief corner-stone."

Section I.—The Work of the Apostolic Life.

Into what great branches of work the Apostolic life is divided was clearly declared by the Apostles themselves when they passed this Decree: *Nos autem* Orationi *et* Ministerio Verbi *instanter erimus*—"But we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the work of the ministry" (Acts vi.).[1]

The meaning of this is, first, that Apostolic men are to be essentially men of prayer; that is, they are to be in continual communication with God, with Jesus Christ, their Head, and with the unseen world. The highest kind of all prayer is the Adorable Sacrifice of the Mass, and the minimum

[1] The Apostles did not mean by this that the laity were to take and administer the possessions of the Church, or that the Church was to exist without temporal possessions. On the contrary, they chose from the laity a certain number whom they raised to the Diaconate, in order to administer the temporalities, under their direction and authority. At the present day some Bishops and Priests are burdened with these inferior and distracting duties, because men cannot be found to bind themselves under ecclesiastical obligations to "serve tables."

The care of these material and temporal interests being now thrown upon the Bishops and Priests, it becomes all the more important to insist upon their realising the nature and the excellence of their primary obligations—continual prayer and the work of the ministry.

of direct prayer and praise tolerated in a Priest by the Church is the daily devout recitation of the Divine Office. Secondly, that Apostolic men are to be intent upon "the work of the ministry"; they are to be continually engaged, directly or indirectly, in work for the salvation of souls. This work may be of various kinds—the chief being preaching, catechising, or teaching the truths and practices of salvation. We easily learn what kind and quantity of work we must severally undertake by the voice of obedience. That voice is heard through Bishops, Superiors, the circumstances in which God places us, and Divine inspirations.

To be continually engaged in prayer and the work of the ministry is no doubt "an arduous," though a sweet, a happy, a prolific life. Missionary Priests, as the Church declares, *in arduum Apostolici Ministerii opus assumuntur.* They therefore need special grace, and they obtain it, when, with eyes fixed on the Adorable Victim in the Mass, they humbly and fervently pray, *Ut partem aliquam et societatem donare digneris cum Tuis Sanctis Apostolis et martyribus.* The Liturgy unites the Apostles and martyrs in one breath, for the Apostolic spirit is the spirit of martyrdom. The Blood of Jesus, and in a subordinate sense the

blood or the life of the Priest, are mingled and offered up together in the Holy Sacrifice, the former to obtain grace and salvation, the latter to become worthy to be employed, and, if need be, shed drop by drop, *in arduo Apostolici ministerii opere.*

And when the day is over, and the Church consigns the body of the Priest to the grave, she prays for him as having been *inter Apostolicos Sacerdotes;* not only because his Orders were Apostolical, but also because his standard of life ought to have corresponded with his Order.

Section II.—Apostolic Work in Sickness.

A word must be said in answer to the objection that a Priest cannot lead an Apostolic life unless he have a vigorous constitution and health that will enable him to undertake great labour and fatigue.

There are no doubt a multitude of Priests whose health is so delicate and uncertain that they need great care, and even many indulgences, if they are to get on at all. Such persons as these sometimes seem to give up everything in despair, and set themselves down to lead as comfortable lives as circumstances will permit. This is indeed a sad

beginning and end. They have broken and thrown away the Apostolic standard in order to become absorbed in the consideration of their own bodily ailments. And maybe they do this in good faith, as though such were the will of God.

But what can they do suffering from delicate health or actual sickness?

They can do three things; and thus lead an Apostolic life, and in the end merit its rewards.

First, they can offer the Holy Sacrifice with an Apostolic devotion. They might study more carefully books explanatory of the prayers and ceremonies of the Mass, and might take greater pains to make the Mass the great work of their day.

Second, the exercise of perfect resignation and patience, and, above all, of entire uniformity of will with the will of God, are virtues characteristic of an Apostolic spirit.

Third, the acceptance of remedies, indulgences, food, rest, &c., as prescriptions ordered by authority, and not as things to be relished, sought after, and used for their own sake, or for the pleasure they may afford. The body is always a traitor, and can be trusted in sickness no more than in health.

St. Ignatius of Loyola was unable even to say Mass during the last two years of his life, and had

to be fed on dainties, and was carefully looked after. St. Alphonsus was deprived of the consolation of saying Mass for fourteen years, was wheeled about in a chair, and was nursed as though he were a child. Yet both these great Saints led lives of Apostolic perfection, advancing day by day in union with God and in the work of saving souls, not by preaching and activity, but by bearing their infirmities and privations for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. The Apostolic spirit, therefore, does not depend upon strong health and active words, but upon something far more spiritual and interior: it is the result of the *geminae dilectionis Dei scilicet et proximi.* Who were more inflamed with Apostolic ardour than St. Teresa and St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi? It is impossible to read the life of the latter without feeling that she was, as it were, mad with the love of God and of souls; yet both these holy Virgins were enclosed contemplatives, and were constantly in poor health.

The misfortune is when the thought and love of self gets so fully the upper hand in sickness as to banish the love of God and desire for the salvation of souls as matters belonging only to health and active work.

Section III.—The Apostolic Standard maintained by reading the lives of Saints and Apostolic Men.

St. Jerome, in his letter of instruction to the convert Paulinus, expresses the mind of the Church in the following sentence :—

Episcopi et presbyteri habeant in exemplum Apostolos et Apostolicos viros ; quorum honorem possidentes habere nitantur et meritum.

Bishops and Priests—he makes no distinction—are to have continually before their mind the lives of the Apostles and of Apostolic men. The work of the Church is to be carried on by Apostles and Apostolic men ; these are emphatically the Bishops and Priests of the Church. How are these men to be formed and sustained ? By following the example of the Apostles and of Apostolic men. *Imitatores mei estote sicut ego Christi.*

The Church takes care that her Priests shall grow up familiar with the lives of her Saints and Apostolic men. She insists upon their obtaining at least a minimum acquaintance with them, by the summary of their biography which is read day by day in the Breviary.

There is no more powerful natural incitement to action than the admiration and sympathy and affection created in our soul by an intimate personal acquaintance with generous and heroic characters: *Cum sanctis sanctus eris.* The Saints with whose lives we become acquainted, as though they had been our own contemporaries, were of the same flesh and blood as ourselves. What God did in them He may do again in us. He can make us "vessels of election to carry His name before the Gentiles," and can fill us with His Spirit, if faith and confidence in His love be not wanting on our part.

Some persons derive most benefit from reading the Lives of Saints in which the supernatural and the extraordinary abound. They delight to see the wonderful display of the power of Divine grace in so frail a creature as man. These biographies, that are written more for our admiration than for our imitation, strengthen our faith in the supernatural, and inspire us with a great confidence in the goodness and power of God. And certainly in these days we need to stimulate and strengthen the life of faith and trust in Providence.

Others, on the other hand, prefer Lives that

are almost wholly practical and within our own possibilities, such as the Life of St. Vincent of Paul, who, like the Baptist, wrought no miracles, or that of St. Francis of Sales, or St. John Baptist de Rossi.

St. Jerome's advice is based not only on the fact that the Church needs Apostolic men in every age, but upon the doctrine of the communion of Saints. We become intimately acquainted with the Apostolic men who have lived before us and are now in heaven, and this acquaintance begets interest and affection on both sides. We honour these Saints in the Church on earth, and they repay us by obtaining grace for us to carry on the great Apostolic work of salvation in which all are interested.

How many men—and women—have owed their vocation, their courage, and determination to lead a nobler life, to the chance reading of a Saint's Life!

It is good and advantageous in every way always to have a Saint's Life on hand. Here, at least, you have a high Apostolic standard in the concrete. You may find yourself falling under the subtle influence of the world, giving more care and attention to human comforts and seductive

pleasures than is good. Turn to your Saint's Life, and you will find therein the corrective and encouragement you need.

Or you may be thrown with companions, even worthy Priests, who have outlived their early aspiration, have fallen from their first fervour, and have taken up with the human maxims of an easy-going life. Such as these by their example, and still more by what they are pleased to call their "practical and common-sense advice," often by degrees chill and shrivel up the spiritual life of a young Priest, who begins to suppose that this is the standard of life that he must conform to.

Here again the Lives of the Saints come to his assistance. These, he says to himself, are my models, the examples for my imitation: *Habeant presbyteri in exemplum Apostolos et Apostolicos viros, quorum honorem possidentes habere nitantur et meritum.*

While treating his senior Priests with real respect, and with a certainty that he has much to learn from their experience, especially in the way of practical work, let him find his best companions among the Saints, and let him hold fast to their standard of life and conduct, and to no other, however much easier it may seem to be.

There are Saints to whom all should have in special and personal devotion, viz. the Mother of Christ, the Foster Father of Christ, and St. Peter, the Vicar of Christ.

Apostolic men, whether engaged upon the conversion of England or on foreign missions, should turn to the Prince of Apostles, the centre of unity, and the fountain of their jurisdiction, with a very particular love and confidence. They should rejoice in the thought that they are, as Peter of Blois, in a letter to Richard, Bishop of London, calls them, VICARII APOSTOLORUM ET FILII PETRI.

You who are Foreign Missioners of St. Joseph's Society remember well the devotion to the Apostles practised at Mill Hill on every Apostle's day. And would that devotion to the Apostles were more common in our ecclesiastical colleges in England and elsewhere. *Habeant in exemplum Apostolos*, &c.

I would recommend all Apostolic men to become thoroughly familiar with the Lives of the Saints, and especially with those who were distinguished for their active service to souls, such as St. Francis Xavier, St. Peter Claver, St. Charles, St. Philip, St. Francis of Sales, St. Vincent of Paul,

St. John Baptist de Rossi. Of all of these there are full and detailed biographies, which are far more useful than the short, meagre lives that are really not written for spiritual reading, but to satisfy the demand for historical sketches, or to gratify a literary taste and style.

It is thus that we shall ever keep high the standard of Apostolic life to which we are called. Filling the mind with the Apostles and the Saints, and above all with the great doctrines that present to us the Three Divine Persons of the Trinity and Our Lord Jesus Christ and His example, we shall not fail by degrees and in course of time to become what we could not be in the beginning of our career; for we must, as the Apostle says, "grow up in Him who is the Head, even Christ."

CONFERENCE VII.

APOSTOLIC OBEDIENCE.

VOS AMICI MEI ESTIS, SI FECERITIS QUAE EGO PRAECIPIO VOBIS.

—*Ex communi Apostolorum.*

SECTION I.

THE Prince of Shepherds led a life of obedience: "My meat is to do the will of Him who sent Me." "Not My will, but Thine be done." "He was made obedient unto death."

He exacted obedience from all associated with Him as shepherds over the flock: *Vos amici mei estis, si feceritis quae ego praecipio vobis*—otherwise ye are not friends, but enemies.

The question is, "What is the relation of Priests who are not Religious to a life of obedience? Are they free from this yoke, and at liberty to do as they please?"

Let me begin by an extract from my journal of memoranda so far back as 1855, containing an answer to another question, "What is the perfection

proper to a secular Priest, and how is he to attain it?"

In 1854 I became acquainted in Rome with Cardinal Reisach, then Archbishop of Munich. He had been Rector of the College of Propaganda in Rome, Founder of the Seminary of Eichstadt in Bavaria, and was deeply interested in all matters of ecclesiastical education. He had with him his Vicar-general, Dr. Windischmann, a great biblical scholar, full of broad sympathies, with a thorough knowledge of the world, and a student of the problem how to adjust the life of the Priesthood to the requirements of modern society. As I was then preparing for my future work of training ecclesiastical students, I accepted the Archbishop's invitation to Munich, in order to confer at greater length and in detail with Professor Windischmann and himself on the interesting question of raising the secular clergy. We had many conversations during the early months of 1855, in which I found between these two great ecclesiastics a singular agreement of thought.

The following is the extract referred to. I had asked Dr. Windischmann to sum up many discussions by a succinct answer to the question, "What do you consider to be the perfection

proper to a secular Priest, and what is the best way to attain such perfection?" He answered as follows:—

"A secular Priest's perfection does not consist in using a multitude of self-imposed prayers and exterior mortifications, which may be suitable to life in the cloister, but are incompatible with the life of active charity to his neighbours, such as a secular Priest should lead.

"The perfection of a secular Priest, like that of a Religious, consists in a great and perfect love of God. The certain way to reach perfect love of God is to be found in carefully doing the will of God. For in doing His will perfectly we attain to the perfection to which God calls us.

"Now for every one, but especially for a secular Priest, obedience is the way to perfection.

"This obedience resolves itself—

"*First*, into great reverence and love for the authority and the voice of the Church; a hearty determination to obey all her ordinances, and to conform our soul to her spirit, not in some things only, but in all.

"Some Priests are for ever questioning the Church's right, or her wisdom. They sneer at decrees and regulations that touch and mortify

their natural inclinations and habits. They obey her grudgingly. Their private spirit is ever sitting in judgment, and disputing the authority of the Church.

"*Next*, after obedience to the Church comes obedience to the Bishop. If the Bishop applies an ordinance of the Church to his Diocese, his voice is then identical with that of the Church.

"In his administrative capacity he may err in judgment, he may be narrow, inconsiderate, and at fault. This may be a trial to a Priest; but his duty is perfectly clear. He should say, 'God can appoint such a one to be my superior and the means of my sanctification. He stands to me in the place of God. I must obey.'

"The Priest in such a case may legitimately make respectful representations to his Bishop. It may be his duty to make such representation. Let him do this once, but let him beware of morally forcing the Bishop by his importunities."

After this the Professor drew out a number of practical conclusions, and among other things he said this:—

"As a consequence of obedience, first to the laws and to the spirit of the Church, and then to one's Bishop, this rule is arrived at.

"Never to seek for distinguished employment and positions, such as the natural man covets.

"When a Priest is once settled by his Bishop in a place or an office, let him beware of the restless spirit of change. His sanctity is perhaps attached to that place or office.

"If there appear to him to be a good reason why he should be moved, let him respectfully represent his reasons to the Bishop, and leave the rest to him.

"They belong to an abominable class who are perpetually asking for a change. This proceeds sometimes from sensuality—a desire to shirk the Cross. A trouble comes, and they have not love of God enough to meet and accept it. Let those soft Priests, who are so tender towards themselves, consider the condition of poor laymen with their families and domestic anxieties and other trials which they must endure and cannot shirk. How are Priests to comfort and sympathise with the laity and their penitents if they are themselves perpetually flying from pain, discomfort, and anxiety?

"Sometimes this desire of change proceeds from pride. They think themselves underrated by their Bishop; they are capable of better things;

they ambition the first places in the synagogue. When I hear of a Priest constantly seeking for change I lose all good opinion of him. The best excuse I can make for him is to say that he is of weak character."

The secular Priest, then is bound to conform to the spirit of the Church, to obey the general canons and regulations of the Church, the Decrees of Provincial and Diocesan Synods, and the formal Decrees and decisions of his Bishop. He knows, moreover, that "When the law is silent the authority of the Bishop stands in the place of law; the more so as, according to the adage of the jurists, 'that which is in the mind of the Bishop has the support of the law' in all matters that regard the administration of his Diocese." (See Leo XIII.'s Constitution, *Romanos Pontifices.*)

Priests make a solemn promise of obedience at their ordination; and many take a vow of obedience, to which we shall refer presently.

But the Christian discipline of obedience is not confined to the clergy. All must obey, if they desire to be saved. *Obedite praepositis vestris et subjacete eis* (Heb. xiii.). *Vos Spiritus sanctus posuit Episcopos regere Ecclesiam Dei* (Acts xx.).

The duty of obedience in the laity covers the

matter of time, of food, of alms, of where they shall go, what they shall do, what they shall not read or think about, and whom they shall assist, besides other things.

To the clergy obedience is essential to the right discharge of their mission. What is their mission? To conquer and to hold possession of the world, as a kingdom for Christ. They are soldiers of Christ, an invading army, an army of occupation They depend not on carnal weapons, but upon moral and spiritual power alone. They are closely organised, under discipline and control, and bound to obey their commanding officers. No army or navy could do its work without discipline. Obedience and discipline are in honour throughout the services. Their subordination is minute and universal.

Every Priest, therefore, promises obedience at his ordination.

While the sacred body and blood of Christ are still within him, he gives his newly consecrated hands into the hands of the Bishop, who says: PROMITTIS MIHI ET SUCCESSARIBUS MEIS REVERENTIAM ET OBEDIENTIAM? To which he replies: PROMITTO. And as the personal fruit of obedience is peace of conscience and the peace of

God, the Bishop adds, PAX DOMINI SIT SEMPER TECUM.

The formal acceptance by the Church of the solemn promise of obedience made by the Priest contains an assurance and a pledge, full of encouragement and consolation to the Priest himself.

He is an officer in the army of Christ; he has promised loyalty and obedience. All the works of his ministry, undertaken in obedience to his Bishop or in conformity with the discipline and canons of the service, are henceforth to be accounted not as private and particular works, but as works belonging to the Christian ministry. They are of a higher order; they are the works of Christ Himself, and deserve a special reward.

SECTION II.—THE APOSTOLIC MISSION VOW AND OATH.

Diocesan Priests in England and Priests ordained for St. Joseph's Foreign Missionary Society pledge themselves to a life of obedience, not only by the canonical promise already referred to, but also by an Apostolic vow.

In the Instruction on this matter published by

the Holy See in 1871, we read: "The title of Mission is given in the case of those who desire to receive Holy Orders, in order to devote themselves to the *Apostolic Missions*." "They receive the necessaries of life from the Apostolic ministry of the Missions to which they have been appointed." "This title of the Mission cannot be given without a special indulgence from the Holy See."

All Priests are not to be ordained to this title, for it is here a question of "being raised to the arduous duties of the Apostolic ministry. Hence this title is only to be made use of in favour of those who, by their disposition and docility, their uprightness, talent, proficiency in sacred studies, morality, and contempt for the things of the world, give promise of becoming earnest preachers of the Gospel."

"Just as with the students of pontifical colleges, all who desire to become priests under the title of the Mission are bound first of all to take an oath that they will labour perpetually in behalf of the Mission to which they are, or shall be, sent. And in order to secure their services for the Missions, at whose expense they are kept, the Holy See has unfailingly been wont to exact

this oath from those who wish to take advantage of this title. To this Instruction is added the Form of Oath already approved and customary, and the Sacred Congregation strictly enjoins its use by all, in order that uniformity may be kept up in this matter.

"It is not essential that one who is to be promoted to Holy Orders by the title should be actually on the Mission, but it is sufficient if he be ready to go on the Missions at the time and in the way his Superiors may think fit to send him and order him to go.

"Those who are ordained by this title are, in virtue of this oath, precluded from entering any Religious Order without permission from the Holy See. For it has been reserved to its judgment—after first hearing from the Ordinary to whom he is subject—to decide whether the needs of the Missions to the service of which he has bound himself may allow this. That is, public good must take precedence of private good, just as is the case with some Religious Orders whose subjects are not allowed to pass to a severer Order without the leave of their Superiors.

"As in the case of other titles, so this one can,

in accordance with canon law, be lost, and may be withdrawn by the Ordinary, with the consent, however, of the Sacred Congregation, whose place it is to free those thus ordained from the obligation of their oath.

"Finally, the Sacred Congregation, seeing that it conduces considerably to the increase of Missions if those who have been brought up as future preachers of the Gospel in colleges or seminaries, secular or regular, or have been raised to Holy Orders by the title of the Mission, from time to time recall to mind the oath by which they have bound themselves to co-operate with God for the salvation of souls, exhorts them to renew the oath every year on the anniversary of their taking it, and seriously to reflect on the Divine goodness in their regard, which has made them Ministers of the Word, for publishing the wonders of His might and power; upon how imperishable a crown of glory is prepared for them in heaven, if they holily discharge their duty; and, on the other hand, how severe a sentence awaits them should any soul perish—and may this never happen!—by reason of their negligence and sloth.

"And that they may do this more readily and

cheerfully, let them remember that Pius VI. of blessed memory, at an audience of May 7th, 1775, granted a Plenary Indulgence, applicable to the souls in Purgatory, and available for all time to come, to all, not only on the day of their taking the aforesaid oath, but also on the said day of their renewing it, provided that on each they omit not to cleanse their conscience by the Sacrament of Penance, and to receive the Holy Communion or offer up the Sacrifice of the Mass."

Form of the Oath taken by those who are ordained under the Title of the Mission.

I, N., son of N., of the Diocese (or Vicariate) of N., promise and swear that when promoted to Holy Orders I will not, without special permission from the Apostolic See, or the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda, enter any Religious Order, Society, or Congregation, or make any profession in any one of them.

I likewise vow and swear, that in this Diocese (or Vicariate or Mission, to which the Holy See or the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda may please to send me) I will ever labour and work in the divine ministry for the salvation of souls

under the complete direction and jurisdiction of the Right Rev. Ordinary for the time being; and that this I will also do, if by leave of the aforesaid Apostolic See I enter any Religious Order, Society, or Congregation, and make my profession therein.

I likewise vow and swear that I understand and will keep the aforesaid oath and its obligation.

So help me God and these Holy Gospels of God.

Whether you labour among the heathen in the exhausting fields of Asia, Africa, and other lands, or among non-Catholics and Catholics at home, you have joy and encouragement in the knowledge that you are now bound by vow, for life, to lead the life of an Apostle.

Analyse the Form of this Oath and Vow prescribed by the Apostolic See.

1. First, you solemnly promise and swear not to enter into any Religious Order or Congregation that may in any way withdraw you from submission and obedience to the Bishop or Ordinary of the Apostolic Mission to which you are ordained. In other words, you swear not to forsake, *sub specie boni melioris*, the Spouse to whom you have pledged your troth.

As a man may not put away his engagement in the holy but lower state of Matrimony to enter into the higher state of Holy Orders, so neither may he break his pledge to his Bishop or his Mission in order to enter into the state of religious perfection.

The Holy See lays down the principle on which this vow is to be defended: PUBLIC GOOD MUST TAKE PRECEDENCE OF PRIVATE GOOD.

I repeat the words of St. John Chrysostom, quoted in a preceding Conference:—

Haec perfectae caritatis regula est, hic artissimus terminus, hoc supremum omnium cacumen, quaerere quae communem omnium comprehendant utilitatem, quod ipse Paulus significans addidit Sicut et ego Christi. Nihil enim potest nos adeo imitatores Christi facere, ut proximorum cura.

In other words, it is more pleasing to God that we should be willing to incur some spiritual loss to our own soul, that we should live exposed to sins and temptations, in order to bring about the salvation of many, than that we should attend exclusively to our spiritual welfare, while a multitude of souls are perishing whom we might save.

Thus the Apostle hesitated not to say, "I wished myself to be an anathema from Christ, for my brethren." And it is the common doctrine of spiritual writers that we may, and often must, expose ourselves to the commission of many sins and imperfections rather than give up the exercise of "charity, which is the fulfilment of the law." *Omnium divinorum divinissimum est cooperari cum Deo in salutem animarum.*

At the same time, the moderation and consideration of the Apostolic See are exhibited by the clause, *Sine speciali licentia Apostolicae sedis.* We may add that there undoubtedly are cases when it is necessary for a man's salvation, and otherwise evidently God's will, that such a dispensation should be sought. But even then there is the remarkable clause and reservation that he must still continue to labour for the salvation of the souls to whose service he was ordained.

2. Then follow the words: VOVEO PARITER ET JURO QUOD (*in hac Diocesi Vicariatu vel Missione*) PERPETUO IN DIVINIS ADMINISTRANDIS LABOREM MEUM ET OPERAM PRO SALUTE ANIMARUM IMPENDAM.

You bind yourself for life (*perpetuo*) to the souls of a particular Diocese, Vicariate, or Mission.

As in marriage, men and women bind themselves to a particular partner for life; as Religious are often bound to a particular monastery or enclosure for life; as a Bishop is bound to a particular diocese for life; so in like manner, for God's glory and the salvation of souls, you voluntarily curtail your choice and liberty, and bind yourself for life to cultivate a certain portion of Christ's vineyard. What a noble, what an heroic act! Life solemnly dedicated to a sacred object!

Besides the devotion and loyalty thus shown to the Good Shepherd, by consecrating yourself entirely to that particular part of the fold in which He wants you, there is in this a no less touching proof of love given to your neighbour. *Majorem caritatem nemo habet, ut animam suam ponat quis pro amicis suis.* This is the example, this the lesson, taught in the Office of Apostles, to whom you are thus generously conforming your life. You consecrate by vow your whole life to the service of the particular souls. You wed yourself to them "till death do us part." If people understood the nature of your charity and devotion to their service, if they fully realised that you have bound yourself for life to promote their eternal welfare, what a return of personal devotion and

gratitude would they not give you in a hundred ways? But it is better, and you are satisfied, to defer the pleasure derivable from such acknowledgments until the day of eternity.

3. Your life is to be spent not in any kind of devotion and service to the people to whom you are sent. It is to be in devotion and service *sub omnimoda directione et jurisdictione R.P.D. pro tempore Ordinarii.* This is equivalent to a vow of obedience. To be under "the complete direction," *sub omnimoda directione,* of the Bishop, is to be under obedience to him in all that concerns the Divine ministry, and labours and works undertaken for the salvation of souls. Zeal for souls is not capable of a more perfect consecration, of a more thorough spoliation of the old Adam, than is contained under these words. It only remains to translate these words into acts, to fulfil the saintly vow thus generously taken by the consecration of every day to its observance. *Vota mea Domino reddam coram omni populo ejus; pretiosa in conspectu Domini mors sanctorum ejus. Vota mea Domino reddam in conspectu omnis populi ejus; in atriis domus Domini, in medio tui Jerusalem.*

In Religious Orders and Congregations the

members elect their own Superiors, and generally have power to change them from time to time; and there are excellent reasons for this discipline. These bodies are the auxiliary forces of the Church, and have either special work to accomplish in fixed places, or are called upon to employ their subjects in helping Bishops in different dioceses. It is impossible to exaggerate the services rendered to souls and to the Church by the Religious Orders. And in these days when the devil is spreading his infernal hatred of the Orders, and seeking everywhere to weaken or suppress them, it is all the more important that you should associate yourselves closely with the Vicar of Christ in their defence, and that you should entertain a high esteem for all who live up to their rule, and to the standard set before them by their holy founders.

But this does not mean that we are to depreciate our own state of life, or to treat it as something inferior. It is for us absolutely the best, because God has called us to it. Our graces are to be found along the path that He has traced out for us; and were we to abandon His appointment in order to follow our own will, were it to become a Carthusian or a Trappist, we should probably end by losing our soul.

Loyalty and fidelity, and even common-sense, point out that an officer ought to cherish and be proud of that part of the service to which he has been attached. To hanker after some other position is, so far, to detach himself from his commission and to weaken the whole-heartedness of his service.

It is true that the Superiors of the regular Orders are chosen by their subjects, whereas the Superiors of those bound by vow "to the arduous duty of the Apostolic ministry" are Bishops. Bishops, however, are consecrated and placed in authority by the Holy Ghost (Acts xx., xxviii.). It is the Holy Ghost who makes them, in a higher order than other men, Fathers in God, with power to rule His Church. Obey them and be subject to them, as rendering an account for your souls.

This is the form of government established by God Himself, and we ought to feel a legitimate pride and confidence in belonging in a special way to this divinely ordained system.

It is no small matter of honour to serve directly under the Shepherds, to whose jurisdiction God has given the world. It is direct service under the authority of the Apostolate; it is the Apos-

tolic ministry in its closest dependence upon the successors of the Apostles.

Besides this, you have among the Saints in heaven special Patrons or Fathers, and Founders if you will, to whom you may look up for protection and guidance.

St. Joseph's Society for Foreign Missions cultivates a special devotion to the Foster Father of Our Lord, who carried Jesus and Mary unto the heathen. *Speciem habet Apostolorum,* as St. Hilary says. He represents the whole college of the Apostles in his own person and Office. And for his most intimate association during thirty years with the Mother and Divine Child, he is the first and most powerful patron to be invoked, and deserves to be chosen as the Father of Apostolic men, especially of those sent into foreign lands.

Then there is St. Peter, chosen by Our Lord Himself to be the Head of His Apostles. You, who are the sons of St. Joseph's Society, know with what devotion all the Feasts of St. Peter and of the different Apostles are kept by your rule. Continue to keep up your devotion to them while on the mission. You will sorely need their help.

Far from dead, He is ever living in His See,

feeding the flock, and marshalling His labourers throughout the world.

The members of Religious Orders study the rules and the writings of their Founders, and live upon their memory; and it is well. And have we not the Epistles and instructions of St. Peter, his speeches in the Acts, his life as portrayed in the Gospels, and the Gospel which he himself dictated to St. Mark? And closely associated with Peter, as having, like him, traversed the whole world, and been a co-founder, by his preaching and his martyrdom, of the Church of Rome, we have St. Paul, and his Epistles. Here then we have the two great Founders of the Apostolic life, the two who, by personal example, and by their writings, are capable to this day of awakening enthusiastic love and service. We know enough of their personalities to fill us with love and admiration; and their writings are not simply matter of human interest, but absolutely true and positively inspired.

But surely all Priests engaged on "the arduous duty of the Apostolic ministry," whether in England or on Foreign Missions, have a special claim upon the intercession of each of the Apostles. They should honour them as Patrons

and Fathers, and celebrate their Festivals with becoming honour and devotion. Could we but revive the Apostolic spirit that has grown so cold, a warm personal devotion to the Apostles would spring up in our ecclesiastical colleges.

But, above all, we ought to make much of St. Peter, the Vicar of Christ, the Head of the Sacred College, the centre of sacerdotal union and authority. Treat him, after Christ, as your Father and Founder, the Head of your Priesthood, the Fisherman of the Universe.

Take him for an example of humility and tears, for your model of love for Jesus Christ; and, with him, take his associate, the Apostle of the Gentiles. Study their speeches and their Epistles and their lives; follow their suggestions and inspiration. Here you will draw in the Apostolic spirit at its very source; nothing purer, nothing stronger, nothing more fascinating. No writings are like those of these two Apostles for our instruction. It is strange how little, perhaps, you have valued them as food for mind and heart, as solid direction for your soul. Some people think nothing of even light, air, and water—the essentials of life—because they are common; so you pay little heed to the writings of these

ST. ALBERT'S

Apostles, because they are common property throughout the Church.

To live under reverence and obedience to Blessed Peter is a great help to the cultivation of the Apostolic spirit of obedience.

But, in addition, you are free to choose special Patrons, whose life should stand before you as a model.

St. Joseph's Society invokes "St. Francis of Assisi as a most faithful preacher of Christ in simplicity of life and love of the Incarnation."

"St. Francis Xavier, as pattern of Apostolic spirit and conduct."

"St. Teresa, as Doctor of the interior life and Missioner and Martyr in desire and merit."

"St. Peter Baptist and Companions, crucified Martyr of Japan." And

"St. Peter Claver, most mortified Apostle of the negro."

And Priests in England will be drawn to cultivate devotion to such Saints as St. Francis of Sales, St. Vincent of Paul, St. John Baptist de Rossi, and many others—from all of whom the lesson of ecclesiastical obedience, which is the subject of this Conference, may be most perfectly learnt.

CONFERENCE VIII.

THE EUCHARISTIC MAJESTY OF THE INCARNATE WORD.

REGEM APOSTOLORUM DOMINUM VENITE ADOREMUS.
—*Ex communi Apostolorum.*

THE Word of God came to us once in visible manhood; He now comes to us often sacramentally in the Eucharist. When the Apostles were commissioned to lay their king upon the altar as a sacrificial victim, they were in no way exonerated from the duty of paying Him such royal honour as they could. In His Eucharistic humiliation the Incarnate Word foregoes no claim to respect. He desires to be accorded a worthy reception. Bethlehem pleased Him not, because it gave Him no reception: *in propria venit et sui eum non receperunt.* But *quotquot receperunt eum* were repaid with royal munificence—*dedit eis potestatem filios Dei fieri.*

Section I.—The High Chamberlain to His Eucharistic Majesty.

The Royal Palace is the Church; the Throne room the Sanctuary; the High Chamberlain the Priest.

We have to do with no simulacrum, or bare commemoration, but with the dread Majesty of God, the Son made man, abiding with us under Eucharistic species. Attentive and devoted service are therefore required. *Sicut oculi servorum in manibus dominorum suorum, et sicut oculi ancillae in manibus dominae suae, ita oculi nostri ad Dominum Deum nostrum.*

The helpless dependency of His Eucharistic Majesty appeals to our every sense of honour, chivalry, and devotion.

In Mary's case He made known His wants in infantine cries and signs of pain or pleasure. In the Priest's case all is silent, hidden. What responsibility to be Chamberlain to God, reduced to this condition of dependency!

In the visions of the Sacred Humanity with which the Saints have at times been regaled, it has never been the reality, but only an appearance

that has visited them. It is St. Teresa who writes that the Sacred Humanity has been present nowhere since the Ascension, except in Heaven and the Blessed Eucharist. "Whom Heaven indeed must receive until the times of the restitution of all things" (Acts iii. 21).

The Royal victim on our altar is no inanimate or sleeping figure. What marvellous lives energise within the narrow circumference of the Host! There is the human life spent on earth, from the moment of its conception to death on Calvary—to the Ascension on Thabor. The historical series of His thoughts, emotions, acts, sufferings, upon earth, is to us as a rolled-up scroll. But here it is within the Eucharist. To the blessed in Heaven it is an unrolled vision. They feast without effort, and at once, upon all the thrilling incidents in the eucharistic life of God upon earth. They contemplate its perfections, its infinite merits, the marvellous effects it has wrought. But the human life within the Eucharist includes the life He has lived in Heaven since the Ascension. That life is the source and the cause of the bliss and happiness of Angels and Saints.

As light descends from the sun, as heat is projected from fire, as streams flow from their source,

so the splendour and the glory, the strength and the power, the light and the knowledge, the sweetness, the love and the satiety of the blessed flow entirely from Jesus Christ. He is their joy, and the life of their life. Through Him, in Him, and by Him they see God. He is to them more than the air that we breathe is to us, more than the sun, with its light, warmth and fertility, is to the earth. With Him they form that one body of which He is at once the Head, the Heart, the Life, and the Bliss.

Here, then, within the Eucharist is this human, royal, bounteous, unimaginable life.

More than this. Here also is the Divine nature of the Second Person of the Trinity, and with the Word, the Father, and the Holy Ghost, in a way most true and most beneficial to us, but in a way absolutely ineffable.

The presence of these lives in the Eucharist and this communication to our life are the result of suffering, the fruit of sacrifice. Wherever the Eucharist, there has been the Sacrifice; there Christ is as a victim, adoring and adored, praising and praised, the food of our immortality. In all this we speak in human words that fail to portray the great truths that are beyond our natural

experience, and exceed the grasp even of the imagination.

But we come back to this—the dependency of Jesus upon His Chamberlain. All things in creation are in a state of interdependence. And here the King of Glory has for our sake made Himself dependent upon His Priest.

Impossible to mount His throne over the tabernacle to receive our adoration, unless a minister lift Him up! Impossible to communicate Himself to the faithful, unless the Priest carry Him! Impossible to become the Viaticum of the dying without a Priest! He will lie humbly, in filth and squalor, if His Chamberlain neglect Him.

"Oh, what are we Priests, and what ought we to be!" writes Father Faber. "Mary drew the Eternal Word down from Heaven once, while we draw Him down daily! She bore Him in her arms till He grew beyond it; but with us, His sacred infancy is prolonged throughout our lives. Can we look into our Mother's face and tell her we are in this way greater than she, and then not think of the holiness our dread office requires! Oh, in what a close union with Mary ought we not to live! She has abandoned her Babe to us, with a reality of

which the favour of a St. Cajetan and others, into whose arms she gave Him, are merest shadows. What are the marvels of the Saints compared to this!"

After this it is a small thing to say that the Priest is bound to treat His Eucharistic Majesty with honour.

The chalice, the ciborium, the tabernacle, the sanctuary, belong in a special manner to the Priest. By the old canon law of England the care and repair of the sanctuary belonged to the Priest, while that of the nave belonged to the laity.

No room in the Presbytery should be better furnished or more scrupulously clean and cared for than the sanctuary. Nay more, no reception room in the houses of the faithful should be more conspicuous for care and suitable appointments. If the laity are blind to this, it is for the Priest to persuade them of it, and to say by his life—*Zelus Domus Tuae comedit me.*

True, Our Lord is often satisfied to lodge in a building as poor as Nazareth, or as the cave of Bethlehem—this especially on Foreign Missions, among heathen population, where the Church is breaking new ground, and the Priest himself is a living picture of Apostolic poverty. But even

here the Apostolic Priest must do all that can be done to pay Him royal honour. He will often wash the altar linen, so that at least it may be clean and spotless, *et accepto corpore, Joseph involvit illud in sindone* MUNDA (Matt. xxvii.); he will feel bound to make up, by his own interior faith and fervour, for the lack of outward honour. However poor the royal apparel, take care that it be clean. *Paupertas semper mihi placuit, sordes vero nunquam.*

Altar societies and confraternities of the Blessed Sacrament are mentioned by the Synods of Westminster as, with confraternities of Christian doctrine, the first popular organisations to be instituted in a mission—an injunction that may well be borne in mind on Foreign Missions.

Section II.—Wonders wrought by His Majesty in the Eucharist.

We owe everything to the Sacred Humanity. Theologians teach that it is the *causa meritoria et instrumentalis omnium donorum et gratiarum Dei quae hominibus conferuntur.* Every grace granted to men and angels has been merited for them by the Sacred Humanity.

St. Clement of Alexandria speaks of the Humanity as "the breast of God," from which we suck into ourselves the very life and nature of God. And as infants while sucking the breasts of their mother are at rest, so "the breast of God" banishes all care and anxiety: *Mamillam Patris quae curarum oblivionem inducit.*

St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi used often to use the same expression, and to speak of "the breasts of the Word, through which we draw and suck into ourselves the sweetness of Divine consolation." This is consistent with the teaching of the Apostle: "Jesus Christ is made unto us wisdom, and justice, and sanctification, and redemption" (1 Cor. i. 30); and He is made all this to us, whenever we worthily receive Him into our body and soul in the Eucharist.

Vasquez, after examining many passages from the writings of the Fathers on this subject, comes to this conclusion: "That the Eucharist not only makes us one spirit with Christ by charity, but it brings about a peculiar union between Christ's flesh and our flesh, which lasts while the sacred species remain incorrupt within us, and continues even after the dissolution of the species; and this because Jesus Christ, having been

received into the body as food, regards and treats our body as a member of His own body, as *de carne ejus et de ossibus ejus.* The mystical and moral union thus established gives to Christ a new and distinct claim to consider our body as belonging to Him, as His own." *We are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones* (Eph. v. 30.)

This power of the Eucharist over the worthy communicant is the common teaching of theologians. St. Thomas puts it thus: "As a bud inserted in a wild stock causes the stock to bear not its own fruit, but the fruit of the bud; so Christ being inserted or grafted upon our nature causes our nature to bear not its own natural, but His supernatural fruit." The Eucharist is not converted into our substance as ordinary food is, but it changes us, in a certain way, into His nature: *Tu mutaberis in Me.* And St. Leo says, *In carnem ipsius, qui caro nostra factus est, transeamus.* St. Gregory of Nyssen writes: *Corpus Jesu Christi cum fuerit intra nos, totum ad se transmutat et transfert*—When the body of Jesus Christ enters into us, It changes and hands over our whole being to Itself.

Again, St. Thomas draws this striking distinction: "Christ, as the companion of our

pilgrimage, and as the price of our redemption, is something distinct and apart from us. There is a distinct separation between a gift and the person on whom it is bestowed. But Christ, as our food, enters into a spiritual union with us. The food and the receiver interpenetrate one another, according to the words: *He that eateth My flesh abideth in Me, and I in him.*"

Though the principal effects of the Mass are produced *ex opere operato, i.e.* by Christ, the invisible Priest and the victim, it is important for the Priest to dwell on this fact—that many and most striking effects proceed *ex opere operantis.* While, therefore, the sacrifice produces its effects throughout the Church *ex opere operato,* and *ex dignitate Christi,* the fruits actually communicated to souls depend largely upon the fervour, devotion, and interior sanctity *operantis*—that is, of the Priest celebrating and of the person communicating.

Every supernatural good work merits an increase of sanctifying grace and of likeness to Christ. It pleads and prays for new gifts and favours from God. It atones, or satisfies Divine justice, and therefore extinguishes wholly or in part the amount of punishment due to sin. This, which is true of every good work, is true also of

the Mass, regarded as a good work *ex opere operantis.*

How much the amount and the value of these effects depend on the fervour and sanctity of the *Operantis* may be seen from the fact that all the acts that were *in se* insignificant, when performed by Our Lord, were of infinite value *ratione sanctitatis personae.*

Every work, however unimportant *in se,* performed by His Immaculate Mother was of immeasurable value. Every work performed by the Saints and servants of God produces effects, whose value is commensurate with the degree of sanctity they have attained and the disposition with which they perform it.

Here is a principle of extreme interest to ourselves. The more we grow in sanctity the greater will be the effects flowing *ex opere operantis* from our Mass. Our sanctity is to be measured by the degree of sanctifying grace we enjoy, and by the virtues we habitually practise. What a motive, what a spur to advance with generous and, if possible, giant strides along the path of holiness!

St. Catherine of Siena explains this principle by the following illustration: "Suppose a number of persons to provide themselves with tapers of

different weight, one weighing an ounce, another three ounces, a third a pound, and so on. If all the persons thus provided lighted their tapers and went each into his own chamber, all indeed would have light and the other properties of a lighted taper, such as heat, colour, brightness, &c. But the amount of such properties in each case would be regulated by the size and weight of his taper—the larger giving more, the smaller ones less. So several persons come to receive the Eucharist. Their dispositions differ in degree as the candles differed in weight. The fruit, therefore, that each one will receive from the reception of the Eucharist will correspond to their respective dispositions. All equally receive the Eucharist, but not with equal fruit. The fruit which each receives corresponds to his ardent desire, his generous love, his personal sanctity."

Hence we draw grace and sanctity from the Mass, little or abundantly, according to our state and dispositions.

"Let us, therefore, approach the Eucharist with a strong desire, and receive it into our souls as a fire to burn away our sins and to enlighten our minds. When set on fire with the divine fire, we become deified" (St. John Damascene).

Our state of sanctity depends upon God and upon ourselves, and is the sum of our growth in grace. Into this question of growth usually enters a question of time. This we must count upon as part of the Divine economy. We must wait for time as a part of grace.

Lanciscius, in writing on the Mass, urges us very much to consider that the efficacy of our petitions, and the amount of the merit we acquire in saying Mass, depend upon the fervour of the celebrant.

St. Thomas, answering the question, "Is all the punishment due to sin remitted by the sacrament of the Eucharist?" says: "That all the punishment is not remitted by either the sacrament or by the sacrifice as such; but that the amount of the remission is measured by the amount of the fervour and devotion of him who celebrates or communicates. Because the Eucharist was not instituted for the direct purpose of making satisfaction, but for the purpose of nourishing the soul by union with Christ. Nevertheless, as union with Christ is brought about by charity, the fervour of which remits not only the guilt but also the punishment due to sin, so, by concomitance and as a consequence of charity, a man may gain through the Eucharist the remission of punishment due to

his sins, and the amount of the remission will be in proportion to the fervour and devotion with which he approaches this sacrament.

"So far as the Eucharist is a sacrifice, it makes satisfaction for sin in favour of him who offers it, and of those for whom it is offered. But although the sacrifice *in se* is capable of satisfying for all punishment, it is made satisfactory to him who offers it, or for whom it is offered, according to the amount of this fervour and devotion, and not according to the quantity of punishment due.

"That the sacrifice should remit a part, and not the whole of the punishment due, happens from no defect in the power of the Divine victim, but from our deficiency in fervour and devotion."

Among the effects of the Eucharist must be mentioned the influence which it sometimes exercises even upon the body. "When I call to mind some persons devout to Thy sacrament, I am often confounded within myself that I am not wholly set on fire in Thy presence, O my God, nor so vehemently drawn onwards and affected, as many devout persons have been, who, from excessive desire of communion and a sensible love in their hearts, were unable to contain them-

selves from weeping; but with the mouth both of their heart as well as of their body, did they from the only marrow of their soul pant after Thee, O God, the living fountain; not being otherwise able to moderate or satisfy their hunger, unless by receiving Thy body with all joy and spiritual avidity" (*Imit.*, Bk. IV. c. 14).

St. Bonaventure tells us that he had known several persons who were physically affected by the reception of this sacrament. They fainted and broke down altogether unless they received Our Lord sacramentally. And when they had received Him, they were so strengthened as to be able to walk and work; whereas otherwise they could scarcely move, from physical weakness.

St. Gregory Nazianzen relates that his own Father was scarcely ever free from acute bodily pain; but that it frequently happened, and this day after day, that he was freed from pain during a few hours after hearing Mass, and was for the time restored to health; and that this deliverance from suffering seemed to be, as it were, in obedience to an edict.

St. Teresa writes that "the Eucharist is a great medicine for bodily infirmities. I have known a person [probably herself] greatly tried by bodily

pain, who was entirely freed from suffering as often as she communicated."

St. Catherine of Siena, St. Catherine of Genoa, St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi, supply many instances of how the Eucharist takes the place of food by strengthening the body and enabling it to fast from all other nourishment.

The Eucharist not unfrequently makes itself felt by persons who come into its presence. I have myself known several cases of Protestants who have received the gift of conversion through the sensible and overpowering influence of the Blessed Sacrament, when they had come into our churches.

Section III.—The Priest preparing for the Sacrifice.

There is a *remote* and a *proximate* preparation. We need both.

I. The *remote* preparation in general is the life we actually lead—of prayer, union with God, and good works.

If we are deeply impressed by the fact that the Mass is the very sun of our existence, round which our lives must revolve as satellites round

their centre, that the offering of this sacrifice is the most stupendous act we can perform, we shall try to turn the whole day into a special and a direct preparation. To do this will not be difficult—nay, it will be sweet and easy, given two conditions: the first, that we take pains to realise more and more vividly what the Mass really is; and the second, that we have formed, or be earnestly trying to form, a habit of ejaculatory prayer.

The following course may be found useful. When in Prime or in morning prayers you offer up all the actions of the day to God, offer them up *as a preparation* for Mass, saying: "I offer everything in the day—working, resting, eating, &c., and all I may suffer—in union with the life of Christ upon earth, and *as a preparation* for saying Mass."

During the day this intention may be continually renewed, and summarised, by the ejaculation, *The Mass! The Mass!*

Or, we may work out our preparations during the day, in connection with the Blessed Virgin and with prayer for the gift of Divine love, adapting for this purpose a stanza from the *Stabat Mater*, thus:—

Fac ut ardeat cor meum,
In amando Christum Deum,
Ut Sacrum digne faciam.

Where the practice has been formed, it has been found productive of extraordinary graces. Nor is it surprising; for God is wont to repay more handsomely such genuine efforts as we make to win the gift of Divine love. He lifts the soul up to Himself; bestows upon it graces of devotion and of union, not only in the act of celebrating Mass, but at least from time to time during the whole course of the day. In fact, He outdoes us everywhere in generosity when He sees that we try to be constant in His service.

II. The proximate or immediate preparation consists in a number of acts of devotion elicited by the soul just before beginning Mass.

St. Charles Borromeo made a rule never to transact business before Mass, in order to avoid distraction. And you will do wisely to follow his example, and avoid whatever may be calculated to excite the mind and fire the imagination or the feelings.

Our personal share in the fruits of the Mass, our power and influence with God in behalf of the objects for which we pray, depend so much

upon the faith and fervour of our immediate preparation, that we ought to be very particular about this exercise.

This instruction does not profess to be exhaustive, but there are four headings to which attention may here be invited.

(1) The Rubric of the Missal says: *Sacerdos celebraturus Missam . . . saltem Matutino, cum Laudibus, absoluto, aliquantulum orationi vacet.* And the Church has drawn up a *Praeparatio pro opportunitate sacerdotis facienda*, which is printed by authority in every Missal, Breviary, and Diurnal, as well as displayed for use in every sacristy.

She does not, however, make the regular use of it a binding precept,[1] as she does the recital of the *Trium puerorum* and the *Benedicite* after Mass. A change in spiritual as in material food is sometimes desirable. Variety whets the appetite, while sameness may soon destroy it. But she does insist on the Priest preparing himself by prayer before vesting for the altar. *Aliquantulum orationi vacet.*

But what is to be done if, when the time arrives for Mass, through some accident the Priest has

[1] Many authorities teach that the recitation even of this CANTICUM is directive rather than preceptive.—*Ed.*

not made his preparation? May he delay the Mass until he has made it? Certainly not; if he is to say a public Mass, or a Mass fixed for a certain hour, public good takes precedence of private good. The Priest is a public Minister, and punctuality is an obligation on a public Minister. You cannot be too particular in beginning Mass punctually to the minute. Priests by want of punctuality drive people away from Mass. Many persons can only hear Mass by carefully timing their movements; and the delay of a few minutes by a negligent Priest will be quite sufficient to decide them not to hear Mass. You cannot be too punctual on this head.

When the Priest, then, through some accident or mistake, has not made his due preparation, and the time has arrived for Mass, he must do the best he can; but there must be no delay or inconvenience for the people. He may remember that all the prayers and ceremonies of the Mass that precede the consecration are in reality preparatory to the sacrifice; and he should make a redoubled effort to use them as such, and so supply for any previous lack of preparation.

(2) In making the usual preparation, there would seem to be special reason why, among

other prayers, we should invoke the Holy Ghost before Mass. Of the seven Collects in the Church's *Praeparatio*, six are directed to the Holy Ghost. This is because the Incarnation is attributed to God the Holy Ghost, *Spiritus Sanctus superveniet in te; et Concepit de Spiritu Sancto.* So the sacrifice of Calvary and of the Mass is attributed to the influence of the same Holy Spirit. "Christ, BY THE HOLY GHOST, offered Himself unspotted unto God" (Heb. ix. 4).

St. Ambrose, in his prayer before Mass, addresses Jesus Christ in these words:—

Summe Sacerdos . . . posuisti mysterium istud IN VIRTUTE SPIRITUS SANCTI TUI, &c. *Doce me, quaeso,* PER SPIRITUM SANCTUM TUUM *tantum tractare mysterium. Ea reverentia et honore,* &c.

And the Priest in the Mass itself prays:—

Veni, Sanctificator omnipotens, aeterne Deus, &c.

In celebrating Mass we need to be set on fire with the love of God, and to be illumined by the light of strong faith. Nothing will be better for this purpose than the use of the hymns and prayers to the Holy Ghost, which the Church adopts on so many occasions.

Remember, too, that as all perfection consists

in cleansing the soul from sin and in following the guidance of the Holy Ghost, so now in this most spiritual action we can perform we need the light and assistance of the Holy Ghost. The reason why so few arrive at perfection is because they habitually follow nature in everything, and seek neither to be animated nor guided by the Holy Ghost. We must be men of desires if we are to accomplish anything for God. And as the Mass is the Priest's great means of perfection, he must come to its celebration with strong desires.

"Though I burn not with so great a desire as Thy specially devout servants, yet, by Thy grace, I have a desire of this greatly inflamed desire, praying and desiring that I may be made partaker with all such fervent lovers, and be numbered in their blessed company" (*Imit.*, Bk. iv. c. 4).

(3) We ought to unite ourselves closely with the High Priest, whose minister and voice we are.

Thus, imagine yourself to be with Jesus in the midst of the Apostles at the Last Supper, hearing from His lips the words of consecration you are to repeat, receiving His command to do what He has done, and devoutly uniting your mind and intention with His in all that He ordains.

Another day, picture to yourself the scene on

Calvary. Unite your soul in sacrifice with the soul of Jesus on the cross. Presently in the Canon, at the *Hanc igitur* and the *Quam oblationem*, you will really unite yourself to the oblation and sacrifice of the Divine victim; prepare for this by contrition and desire. Join in the Infinite Adoration and Thanksgiving which Christ on the cross offered up to God; and in the prayer and satisfaction He poured out for all sinners.

Stand close to His Blessed Mother and say:—

Sancta Mater, istud agas,
Ut crucifixi fige plagas
Cordi meo valide.

With these thoughts proceed to vest for Mass.

Or again, reflect that in reality there is under the great canopy of time and space, under the blue vault of heaven, but one Divine Sacrifice available *pro vivis atque defunctis*. It is no other than the sacrifice you are about to offer, one with the sacrifice of Calvary, in the sense defined by the Church. You stand at an altar in the midst of the universe—the very central point of the hopes and happiness of men and angels. The human race crushed under the burden of countless crimes pleads by its very miseries for mercy

and grace from this unique sacrifice. In the blood of this Divine victim alone are salvation, health, and life. All the nations and tribes, in utter helplessness, gather, like cattle driven by the storm for protection, around the sacrifice of the Lamb, that you are about to offer *pro omnibus circumstantibus, pro vivis atque defunctis.* With what awe and devotion will you not now proceed to the altar, to stand with Christ between God and the human race!

(4) Form the intention or intentions for which you propose to offer the *special fruit* of the sacrifice. The *general fruit*, of course, goes to the universal Church according to the mind of the Church and the words of the Mass; and the *most special fruit* is inalienable from the Priest actually celebrating, unless his dispositions hinder his reception of it. But the *special fruit* is that which the Priest can give to any person or object he pleases. Though an habitual or an unrevoked donation of this *special fruit* is sufficient, it is very desirable to record the intention or donation *distinctly* during the preparation for Mass.

As to particular intentions, Priests will have their own favourite intentions. But, speaking to young Priests called to the Apostolic life, we

would counsel them to bring their daily Mass into the closest conjunction with their own spiritual life, and with their mission to souls. And this may be done in the following way: Offer up the *special fruit*, or the principal intention, or (if this be bespoken by some duty or obligation) the secondary intentions, that you can legitimately dispose of, in behalf of all or some of these objects, viz.:—

1. For the gifts of humility, prayer, and Divine love.

2. For a generous Apostolic spirit.

3. For the conversion of England, or of the country to which your Apostolic life is consecrated.

4. For the souls in Purgatory.

Put into the hands of Mary all the satisfactory part of the sacrifice that you are free to dispose of, in order that she may apply it with an added wisdom, love, and efficacy that you cannot pretend to. This will wonderfully enhance your influence with God, and your power to help the suffering souls. Remember that Our Lord yearns to receive those holy souls more ardently than even they can desire to fly to Him. Offer up all the free Masses you can for these souls. Lay the whole of Purgatory under deep obligations to you.

When you come to the Mementoes, in the Mass, for the Living and for the Dead, pause only just long enough to say, "According to the intentions already specified," or "According to Our Lady's intentions."

These, then, are briefly the four heads of preparation to which attention is called:—

1. The use of Prayers.

2. A special appeal to the Holy Ghost.

3. An act of union with Jesus Christ, as Priest and Victim.

4. The formation or specification of certain Intentions.

To this may be added, in the spirit of the Church, the recital of Prime and Terce, or of Terce and Sext.

It will need foresight and self-denial always to secure for your Mass a good Preparation. But it is only with time and practice that we can become perfect.

Section IV.—The Manner of Celebrating.

Qui missam praecipitat, in infernum praecipitat, is an ecclesiastical proverb containing a whole instruction. To know well the meaning of

all the Prayers and Ceremonies of the Ordinary of the Mass is an immense help to saying Mass well. They cannot be known without careful study of the works written on the subject. The extreme brevity of the prayers, their deep meaning and allusion, their close connection with one another, their relation to the mystery, and their history require study to be understood.

But how can any one follow the meaning of prayers and ceremonies, if these be hurried through at the utmost speed, the words being often clipped and half said in the haste to get on! Tertullian hearing a Mass said in this fashion, asked in amazement, "*Sacrificat an insultat?*"—("Is it sacrifice or insult that he offers?") The Venerable Bellarmini said that the sight of some Priests at the altar suggested a man racing to escape robbers in hot pursuit.

"Be not too slow, nor too quick, in celebrating. Thou oughtest not to beget weariness or tedium in others; but keep the common way, according to the institution of Superiors, and rather accommodate thyself to the utility of others than follow thine own devotion" (*Imit.*, Bk. iv. c. 10). Of Superiors who have laid down rules on this subject it will suffice to quote three.

Benedict XIV. says that there is a unanimous opinion that Mass must never be said in less than twenty minutes, and that it should not usually be over thirty. St. Ignatius desired that his Religious should not much exceed half-an-hour. And St. Alphonsus lays down half-an-hour as the proper length of time for Low Mass. An Italian saying is, "Half-an-hour between Amice and Amice."

Beware of wearying the people by exceeding half-an-hour; and beware equally of scandalising them by haste and irreverence.

A Priest saying a private Mass, at which there is no congregation present, is allowed to somewhat prolong the time, especially between the Consecration and the Post-Communion, in order to satisfy his private devotion.

Nearly all writers on the Mass agree that the Priest ought to follow with mind and heart the meaning of the words and ceremonies he uses. If he is not able to do this, he is like a man walking through a garden in glory with most beautiful and choicest flowers, but with his eyes bandaged.

There are many good and learned books on the subject. But I would recommend to all a

little work recently published by the President of the Grand Séminaire at Bruges, Canon VAN DEN BERGHE, entitled, *Ordo Missae, seu precum ac caerimoniarum Missae interpretatio theologico-ascetica.* It is small, portable, condensed, and learned—a perfect *vade mecum* for a missionary Priest.

SECTION V.—THE PRIEST RETURNING FROM THE ALTAR.

When the Priest is coming away from the altar he recites the Antiphon, *Trium puerorum,* with the Canticle and Psalm of praise and thanksgiving, followed by the prescribed prayers. This is held by Baldeschi, Chaignon, and others to be of obligation because laid down in the rubric, whereas the prayers of preparation, *pro opportunitate,* are not ordered by the rubric.

Talk with none but with God alone—*secretum meum mihi*—until you have finished your thanksgiving. Be not drawn away from this rule without a grave necessity. Mere civility or complaisancy is no reason. You have to entertain His Majesty, and others must wait. Get to some quiet place in the sacristy or in the

church for your thanksgiving. "Let us be careful," writes St. Alphonsus, "after Mass to treat with Jesus Christ at least during *one half-hour*, or at very least during a quarter of an hour; but a quarter of an hour is too little."

If you can make up your mind from the outset of your Priesthood to give simply "one half-hour" regularly for thanksgiving, it will be a consolation to you all your lifetime. But be rigorous, be despotic in holding to it, or you will soon give in. Of course in time of Missions or Festivals, when you are wanted to administer sacraments, and also when you have had a long fast and are physically exhausted, the time for thanksgiving may be reasonably, and rightly, curtailed.

If you are known to take your "half-hour" after Mass, you will soon find that things will go on well without you. You may simply say, "Don't wait for me." Your practice will be respected. Your example may help others, who only need example and encouragement to do the same thing. Above all, your own soul will grow rich by the time spent in gathering in the harvest which is now to your hands. St. Teresa and many others declare this time to be the most fruitful, and therefore the most precious, of the whole day.

Having finished the prescribed form of thanksgiving, turn to such intimate and familiar communications with His Majesty as you feel drawn to. When this is done, make use of Indulgenced Prayers, and of prayers drawn up by Saints. What more beautiful than the words of St. Bonaventure? *Transfige, dulcissime Domine Jesu, medullas et viscera animae meae, suavissimo et saluberrimo amoris tui vulnere, vera serenaque et apostolica sanctissima caritate, ut langueat et liquefiat anima mea solo semper amore et desiderio tui,* &c. Or the prayer, *Suscipe, Domine, universam meam libertatem,* &c. The *Anima Christi;* the *Obsecro te, dulcissime Domine,* &c.; the *En ego, O bone,* &c.; and some prayer to Our Blessed Lady and St. Joseph.

When the soul is exhausted and weary, hesitate not to give it some relief by varying your devotions. Sext and None, and sometimes Vespers, may very properly be recited as a part of your thanksgiving, and this may help to saying the office more devoutly.

Section VI.—Why the Mass often produces so little Effect.

Pervulgatum apud sanctos Patres axioma est, quod talem se animae exhibet Deus, qualem se illa praeparat Deo. Ideo Christus in Eucharistia aliis quidem est fructus vitae, et tertium coelum in quo audiuntur arcana verba. Aliis vero est panis insipidus.

Pauci sunt qui admirabilis hujus sacri convivii in se sentiant effectus, quia PAUCI SUNT QUI SE AD ILLOS RECIPIENDOS RITE DISPONUNT. . . . *Ideo multi infirmi sunt et imbecilles; et dormiunt multi.*—(Cardinalis Bona.)

It is obvious that the celebration of Mass produces in some Priests no visible effects of sanctity. It is undeniable that, after celebrating Mass for years, they show no progress in virtue, but become more impatient and selfish, more critical and overbearing, more worldly and unspiritual than when they were younger. And yet, according to St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi and others, one communion well made is enough to make a Saint.

Whence comes this strange and lamentable phenomenon, which is too glaring to be denied?

It cannot be put down to the occupations of an active life. The Apostles, St. Francis Xavier, St. Charles Borromeo, St. Francis of Sales, St. Vincent of Paul, St. John Baptist de Rossi, were perpetually spending themselves and being spent in active work for souls, but they ever grew in union with God and in sanctity of life. When St. Catherine of Siena was ordered to engage in most distracting and harassing affairs among men, she experienced a great increase of tender and sensible devotion, and was seized with a continual and burning desire of the Blessed Sacrament.

The reasons why Priests draw little or no profit from the Mass, though actually in a state of grace, may be reduced to three principal heads:—

1. Want of preparation for Mass, through sloth, carelessness, or absorption in other things. *Si ex quodam torpore, vel ex distractione non se debite praepararet, aut nullam aut modicam efficaciam reportat.*—(St. Bonaventure.)

We read in the Revelations of St. Bridget, that Our Lord, speaking of a Priest who had made a bad end, said, "He constantly said Mass, but it profited him little, through neglect of preparation."

It is not surprising, therefore, that Cardinal Bona should insist as earnestly as he does on preparation for Mass: *Instante celebratione totis viribus curare debet, ut in ara cordis divini amoris succendat,* &c.

2. Another reason why a Priest fails to profit by saying Mass is, that he takes no pains to examine his conscience and to destroy his affection to venial sins and innumerable bad habits.

St. Gregory and St. John Chrysostom, speaking of Holy Communion, say that just as the stomach when charged with one kind of food has neither appetite nor power to digest other food, so the soul that is filled with venial sins and with attachments to them has no hunger after Christ, no spiritual appetite for this food. We are bidden to hunger and thirst after justice, and our Justice is Christ. But this hunger and thirst are impossible to a soul already burdened and satiated with venially sinful habits. St. Paul alludes to this where he says, "Let a man prove himself, and so let him eat of this Bread."

3. A Priest who celebrates as a mere matter of routine, or of human contract, will receive little or no fruit of grace, even though he be free from mortal sin—because the due dispositions are

wanting: *Ideo multi infirmi sunt et imbecilles et dormiunt multi.*

À Kempis sums up the matter, according to the teaching of the Gospel. "So few become illuminated and internally free, because they know not how entirely to renounce themselves. My sentence stands sure; unless a man renounce all, he cannot be My disciple. Thou, therefore, if thou desirest to be My disciple, offer thyself to Me, *with all thy affections.* As I willingly offered Myself to God the Father for thy sins, with My hands stretched out upon the cross and My body naked, so that nothing remained in Me that was not completely turned into a sacrifice to appease the Divine wrath; even so oughtest THOU WILLINGLY TO OFFER THYSELF TO ME DAILY IN THE MASS, AS HEARTILY AS THOU CANST, WITH THY WHOLE ENERGIES AND AFFECTIONS for a pure and holy oblation" (Bk. iv. c. 8).

SECTION VII.—HOMAGE TO THE KING.

1. To bring a distinguished guest into one's house, and never to go near him during the whole day, is to be wanting in elementary civility. A king would soon dispense with the services of a cham-

berlain who treated him after this fashion. Now the Priest, having called the King of Glory into the church and having placed Him in the Tabernacle, ought in decency to visit Him at least once a day, if he be at all able to do so; so any one would suppose.

I know not what judgment may pass through Our Blessed Lord's mind, when He sees His Priest with time for everything and for everybody, but never a moment for a short visit of homage to Himself. But I do know what many of the devout laity think, and say, when they notice that the Priest never goes near the church to pray, or to make a visit—except in his public or official capacity. We should not complain of their criticism. We must expect to be scrutinised by the faithful, because *our* conduct is to form *their* model—*forma gregis facti estis.* A model has to be scanned and studied in detail. Woe to us, therefore, if we fall short of our vocation.

Ill health, an extraordinary demand upon his time, distance from the church, and travelling are perfectly legitimate excuses for not paying a visit of devotion to the Blessed Sacrament. Of course there is no obligation under sin to make such a visit at any time. But we are not speaking of sin,

but only of what may be expected of a chamberlain who is devoted to His Sovereign.

An active Priest, full of love for souls, will feel the need of retreat into the sanctuary. He must obtain light, help, comfort. He has spiritual enemies to encounter, insidious and fierce, and it is natural that he should present himself before his General at least once a day when he can conviently do so. But if he be under the fascination of the enemy, if love of the world and of pleasure decoy him, he will soon put aside every work of supererogation.

It is good for a Priest to make a variety of pleas for going to the church, so that if he does not go there on one plea, he will on another. For instance, meditation, spiritual reading, the office, examination of conscience, preparation of sermons and instructions, care of the church, the need of getting away from worries and annoyances, including those that spring from one's own temper and temptations—these may form excellent pleas for a devout visit, or for a little rest and quiet within the calm of the sanctuary.

2. The sanctuary is "the shadow of a rock that standeth out in a desert land." Oh that we could add with Job, "and the rock poured me out rivers of oil."

Take a not uncommon case. A young Priest is sent on the mission, full of zeal, and bent upon the conversion and salvation of souls. He soon discovers that his lot, though in the midst of people, is really in a barren desert. Men cross and recross his path, but have nothing in common with him, and appear and disappear like Bedouins. He meets some wayfarers of his own creed, and occasionally falls in with a stranger who has lost his way, or is perhaps down, half-dead with the wounds of sin. These occurrences are too rare, and he is discouraged by want of work and opportunities.

This happens not only in pagan lands—India, Uganda, Borneo—but in London, Colchester, and throughout the length and breadth of England. The Priest is sent to convert the country, but to whom shall he preach? He has no access to the homes and minds of the people. The first condition of success is wanting—contact. To such a Priest, the sanctuary, whether in a costly church, in a wigwam or a tent, is the most delicious oasis in the desert—"the shadow of a great rock that standeth in a desert land." Here are shade and protection from the storm of evil that bloweth all the day, and a welcome change from the scene that

has been to him as a barren desert as far as the eye can reach. Here a river of refreshment and the oil of gladness is offered to the soul that was desolate and athirst. Here is Jesus Himself sitting beside the well of sweet waters, able to tell you all that you have done and felt. Here He is, your comfort and your strength.

He puts thoughts into your mind, words into your mouth, and you exclaim, *In terra deserta, in invia, et inaquosa, sic in Sancto apparui Tibi, ut viderem vertutem Tuam et gloriam Tuam.* "I was in a land abandoned by God, a land from which the lines and laws of faith had been obliterated, a desert land in which the fountains and streams of grace were no more, a pathless, cheerless wilderness, and so I have been driven to appear before Thee in Thy sanctuary, that by means of contemplation and prayer I might come to see that all virtue, and all the glare and reward thereof, are from Thee alone." *Sic in Sancto apparui Tibi, ut viderem vertutem Tuam et gloriam Tuam.*

But this is not all. For the inspired words go on: *Sic benedicam Te in vita mea, et in nomine Tuo levabo manus meas.* A new courage has grown up in his heart with the knowledge he has now acquired of the wondrous ways of God.

"And so will I bless and praise Thee during the days of my life, and in Thy name I will lift up my hands."

And on these latter words St. Augustine reminds us of a practical truth, viz., that *eas qui levant manus ad Deum in Oratione, si impeprare velint, debere etiam levare manus ad opera bona facienda.*

And finally the Priest, who had been saddened by his first experiences, will joyfully sing, *Sicut adipe et pinguedine repleatur os meum; et labiis exultationis laudabit os meum* (Ps. lxii.).

3. An Apostolic Priest must pass, like the Apostles themselves, through many trials and labours. Like them he must return as often as he can to the side of his Master: *Regem Apostolorum Dominum, venite adoremus.*

"Without a friend," says à Kempis, "thou canst not well live; and if Jesus be not thy friend above all, thou will be exceedingly sad and desolate. How dry and hard art thou without Jesus! How foolish and vain if thou desire anything out of Jesus! If in all thou seek Jesus, doubtless thou will find Jesus."

Accustom yourself, then, to frequently visit Jesus in the Tabernacle. Learn the art of being

at home with Him. It is here that many fail; they are never at home with Him. They maintain a stiff and stilted attitude to the end, and therefore peaceful and happy intimacy never springs up.

No formal or violent effort is required. Approach Him in different ways, according to your mood or inclination. Thus, sometimes sit quietly before the altar and gaze on the crucifix. Hear Him saying: "I have stretched forth My hands all the day long, and there was no one to grieve with Me.

"My feet are nailed to the cross. I am a captive to love; there is no escape; do with Me as thou wilt.

"My side and My heart are pierced; enter therein, search out the spot that was impressed by intense love I bore to thee. Weary, feeble soul, here is thy refuge *in die tribulationis;* bury thyself in My blood, make thy home in My heart, now and for ever."

From the crucifix your eyes and affections may descend to the Tabernacle. And you may recite slowly the *Suscipe, Domine, universam meam libertatem,* &c., the *Anima Christi,* the *Miserere,* or any other favourite prayer or ejaculation. Or

you might read one of St. Alphonso's Visits to the Blessed Sacrament and to Our Lady.

Another day, the statues of Mary and Joseph may remind you of the Holy Family — Jesus standing in the middle. You are the slave of Jesus in Mary, and may say in familiar words all that you feel and desire.

Or you may think of Magdalene seated *secus pedes ejus*, and feel happy just to be there quietly, in His presence, and near to Him.

You may have trials and temptations to speak of; your feelings have been deeply wounded by some injustice, some unkindness, some neglect. Your will has been rudely contradicted; your plan, on which you had set much store, has been disregarded and upset by a Superior. Or your pride has been mortified; or you believe that you are unjustly under a cloud; or you are suffering the assaults of an Angel of Satan, and God's grace alone can suffice. In all these matters you are certain to find sympathy and assistance here.

Or, once more, sit in the sanctuary with your rosary, and think that He who is *in gloria Dei Patris, in splendoribus sanctorum*, is now so near to you, in order to wean your affections from the

earth, and to excite in you a desire of heaven. *Quam sordet tellus dum coelum aspicio !*

Lastly, it is before the Tabernacle that great undertakings for God's glory and the salvation of souls have been formed or matured. The worldly lights of human and carnal prudence pale and disappear under the supernatural light of the sanctuary.

Regem Apostolorum Dominum venite adoremus, and plead with Him for the conversion of England, of heathen races, and for whatever works you have in hand.

3. As to the choice of time for audience of the King, all times of the day or night are the same to Him. Each person must settle the hour for himself, according to circumstances. But, where possible, evening or nightfall would seem best. The work and the distractions of the day are over. Nature is at rest, and the soul grows calm. A sense within says, "Stay on, because it is evening." *Mane nobiscum, Domine, quoniam advesperascet; inclinata est jam dies.* "And He went in with them, and their eyes were opened, and they knew Him."

CONFERENCE IX.

APOSTOLIC LABOURS.

EUNTES IBANT ET FLEBANT MITTENTES SEMINA SUA.
—*Ex communi Apostolorum.*

VISIBLE success is not the measure either of our service or of our reward. It is necessary to look this truth fully in the face in order to penetrate and understand its meaning. We shall find that nothing is more consoling or more stimulating than the complete realisation of this truth. But to arrive at this realisation there must be no indulgence in illusions, no contentment with superficial appearances; we must assert the facts and accept the promises made by God.

The characteristic of the Apostolic life consists not in triumphs, but in labours and sufferings undertaken out of love for Jesus Christ. Love, personal love, for Jesus Christ is the root out of which spring the manifold virtues and labours of Apostolic men. The branches, the flower and the fruit depend upon the nature and vigour of

the root. This is plain. Without strong love for Christ there can be no strong and constant labour in His service.

That the life of Christ's Apostles was given up to labours, sufferings, and death is brought out in a striking manner in the Office of the Apostles. To take a few passages by way of illustration. The antiphon of the *Magnificat* runs thus: *Tradent enim vos*, &c. "For they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues, and ye shall be brought before kings and governors for My sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles."

Again:

"Behold I sent you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves, saith the Lord; be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves."

In the Lessons of the First Nocturn we read:—

"I think that God hath set forth us Apostles, the last, as it were men appointed to death; for we are made a spectacle to the world, to angels and to men. We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye are honourable, but we are without honour. Even unto this hour we both hunger and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and

have no fixed abode, and labour, working with our own hands; we are reviled and we bless; we are persecuted and we suffer it. We are blasphemed and we entreat; we are made as the refuse of this world, the offscouring of all even until now."

The Responsaries strike the same note:—

"Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven. When men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of Man's sake."

"These are they who, while yet they lived in the flesh, planted the Church in their own blood: they drank of the Lord's chalice, and became the friends of God."

The last antiphon of the Office sums it all up:—

"Wax valiant in battle, and strive against the old serpent; and ye shall receive an everlasting kingdom."

While we read this description of the Apostolic life, the Church puts us upon our guard against misunderstanding, and against fear and discour-

agement, in these words of St. Paul: "I write not these things to confound you, but I admonish you as my dearest children."

Thus you will take the true measure of the Apostolic life, and "be able to comprehend, with all the Saints, what is the breadth, and length, and height, and depth, to know also the charity of Christ, that you may be filled unto all the fulness of God" (Eph. iii.).

Though the Apostles, according to the teaching of theology based upon the Scripture and tradition, occupy the highest place among the Saints in heaven, after the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph, their lives on earth were far from being the most conspicuous and remarkable of those recorded in the pages of history. Most of them are unknown to us save by the scantiest record. Some are spoken of, like St. James, as having laboured much and achieved little. All the Apostolic Sees but one have perished. Most of the races and countries evangelised by their labours have fallen away. The prestige of their personal connection with Our Lord, their numerous miracles, their surpassing sanctity, have failed to assure to their memory a place in the minds of men equal in renown to that enjoyed by men whose greatness

has been strictly confined to the natural order, as conquerors, savants, or discoverers.

Humanly speaking, and in the sight of their contemporaries, their lives ended in visible failure. For what was the end of even the two most illustrious Apostles, Peter and Paul, but an ignominious death, which seemed to cut short all their projects and all their hopes of success! Well may the Apostle have declared that "if in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable" (1 Cor. xv. 19). "We are made as the refuse of this world, the offscouring of all even until now" (1 Cor. iv.).

But still more remarkable for present and apparent failure was the missionary life of Our Lord Himself. His most attractive and beautiful personality, His prodigality in the use of miracles, His generosity in the bestowal of all manner of gifts, His benignity, His humility and gentleness, His perfect mastery of all truth, of the knowledge of men's minds, of the power of speech, His divine nature and personality—all these endowments and gifts, far from commanding triumphant and glorious success, were compatible with only a few inconstant converts as the result of three years of incessant labour, with a failure of justice in all the

law courts, and with a termination of His career by a disgraceful death. Three enemies waged war against Him—the devil, the world, and the flesh. To all the world they seemed to triumph; He seemed to fail. "Christ crucified *was* unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Gentiles foolishness" (1 Cor. i. 23).

And if you consider the subsequent history of His mission, and of that of the Holy Ghost in the world, through the Church which He has founded in His most precious blood, how far short it falls of what we should naturally expect from the direct action of God upon mankind! Patches of the earth's surface have been converted to Christianity after ceaseless preaching and the sacrifice of innumerable lives during the last two thousand years; and of these patches how many have rejected or poisoned the Gospel by a wilful acceptance of error? Barely does one-sixth of the human race profess the Catholic Faith. And of these, how many live up to its dictates and are devout Catholics? And yet, never in any age was the Church more widely spread than she is at present! How many hundreds of millions of our fellow-creatures are yet bound by the chains of error, and have never even heard of the name of their Blessed Saviour!

This failure to obtain a general and universal success—this continuous triumph of the powers of evil—appears at first sight disheartening and incomprehensible. If you seek the cause of it in the coldness and negligence of Catholics—in our want of generosity, of zeal, of charity, of faith and self-denial—you may have discovered part of the cause, but certainly not the whole cause. No such reproach could be addressed to the Saints and the great Apostles of the Church, ancient and modern, yet they failed to accomplish all they attempted, and their greatest success was everywhere narrowly limited. It was so even in the life of God Himself, when He took our flesh and dwelt amongst us as our Teacher and Saviour.

It is certain that "God our Saviour will have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. ii. 4). It is certain that He gave a formal injunction to preach the Gospel of salvation to all men: "Go ye into the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be condemned." It is certain that He promised to accompany His Apostles as they went on preaching His name until the end of the world: "Going, teach ye all nations, baptizing them, &c., teaching

them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, and behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." And yet with all this, with the bestowal upon many of His followers of heroic sanctity, and of the gift of miracles, the progress and conquests of Christianity are only where they are.

We shall never reconcile ourselves to the position in which we find ourselves—of making immense efforts, of persevering for years in work without effecting any proportionate result—until we realise the Divine economy as shown forth in the life of Our Lord Himself. One sigh, one act, one drop of the precious blood were sufficient to redeem a thousand worlds. And yet He poured out upon us the value and merit contained in a full life of three-and-thirty years of thought, desire, action, and suffering. The prodigality of expenditure by Jesus Christ in order to obtain certain restricted and limited results, can never be approached by all the efforts of all his servants put together. An infinite Divine waste seems to have been required in order that Our Lord Himself should accomplish His work. And to His own sufferings, infinite as they were, have to be added other sufferings endured by His Apostles and dis-

ciples through all time. "I will show him," the Lord said, speaking of Saul of Tarsus, not what great conquests he should achieve, but "how great things he MUST SUFFER for My name's sake" (Acts ix. 16), as though sufferings were to be the distinctive portion of the Apostolic life, just as they were of the life of Christ. And thus every missioner, every servant of God who labours for the conversion of souls, while bearing in mind the thought of the infinite merits of Christ, must say, if he would realise the dispensation of salvation, "I fill up those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ in my flesh for His body, the Church, whereof I am made a minister" (Col. ii.).

We find this prodigality, this apparent waste, in the order of Nature. Think of the countless myriads of seeds borne by trees, plants, and grasses, and how few ever even take root! Think of animal life, in its various orders of living creatures, from the smallest up to man himself, and see how little of all that comes into primary existence ever reaches maturity. Can we be surprised, then, that of all our efforts so few bring forth fruit? Shall we repine or rebel if we find our lives are regulated by a law that seems to pervade Nature, and that

has been nowhere more wonderfully illustrated than in the life of Our Lord Himself?

Section II.—The Sower and the Seed.

The natural objection to the expenditure of fruitless effort, to unprolific fatigue and trouble, is felt only strongly by some men, especially by such as have no redundant energies to work off, and are by temperament more inclined to rest than to a life of exertion. Our Blessed Lord Himself was well aware of this, and He has therefore left to all Apostolic men a graphic instruction upon this matter.

"The sower went forth to sow his seed." It was the Lord Himself who went forth from the bosom of His Father, from the womb of His Mother, from His home at Nazareth, after He had fasted and prayed and been tempted. He went forth to sow His seed. "The seed is the Word of God," and "the field is the world." The seed is sown everywhere—all men are called to salvation; the sower therefore does not discriminate, but scatters the seed or preaches the Word of God everywhere and to every one. Four classes of people are mentioned. To some "the devil cometh"—"imme-

diately Satan cometh and taketh away the Word that was sown in their heart," "lest believing, they should be saved." "Others believe for a while, and in temptation fall away." Others, again, are engrossed "by the cares of the world, the deceitfulness of riches, and lusts after other things"—their souls "are choked with the cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and yield no fruit." One class only out of four "understandeth and beareth fruit;" this is the only class that "in a good and very good heart, hearing the Word, keep it, and bring forth fruit in patience."

So much, then, for the fate of the seed that was diligently sown, and for the state of the souls to whom the Word of God was preached. But now as to the sowers? And undoubtedly we are identified with the Lord Himself as the sowers.

In the New Testament it is written, *Euntes in mundum universum*, &c.; in the Old the Prophet beheld their going forth, and exclaimed, *Euntes ibant et flebant mittentes semina sua.* The evangelist announced the main fact, *Euntes praedicabant ubique;* the seer was struck by their perseverance, their labours and sorrows, *Euntes ibant et flebant.*

The work of the farm sower, who scattered the

seed with his own hand, demanded strength and perseverance as well as skill. *Euntes ibant*, they went on and on; they continued going all through the day, bearing the heat and the cold. "Man shall go forth to his work, and to his labour until the evening;" until the end of life shall the Apostolic man persevere everywhere, *ubique*, sowing the seed and preaching, addressing himself to all classes as they come.

Et flebant. Why do the sowers, engaged in so blessed an occupation and privilege as scattering the seed of heavenly life among men, weep? Why, on the contrary, are they not singing for joy? There are many causes for tears. The work of the sower is very hard. He carries a heavy burden; the seed has been prepared with much labour; the weight of every grain must pass through his hand, it must be scattered steadily and truly by his right arm: every part of the field must be covered. He must measure the distance accurately, his tread must be regular, or either the seed will be wasted, or the field will not be equally sown. His labour is from the morning even until the evening. He must catch the seed-time while it lasts; his strength, comfort, and inclination must yield to the exigency of the

season. Here, then, is labour enough to tax the strongest nerve. And it is continuous, *Euntes ibant.* There is the waste of human strength, but there is also the waste of precious seed. The duty is to sow the whole field, rich land and poor, rocky, light soil and deep, the well-tilled earth and the ill-cleaned—all, the whole field must be sown. The sowers, with their weary limbs, and aching arms, and streaming brows, weep over the inevitable waste and loss; they know not how much or how little will spring up. But on they go, *Euntes ibant et flebant, mittentes semina sua,* sowing their own seed, *semina sua,* which they had acquired by much labour, which they rightly valued as priceless, because "the seed is the Word of God," but which they saw was to be so largely wasted and thrown away.

There are many ways of sowing. "Preach the Word: be instant in season and out of season; reprove, entreat, rebuke in all patience and doctrine. Be thou vigilant, labour in all things, do the work of an evangelist, fulfil thy ministry." You may sow the seed not only by actual preaching, but by writing, distributing printed matter, by acts of kindness, by sympathy, winning the confidence and goodwill of men, simply by showing yourself

as a servant of God, as St. Francis preached the Gospel merely by walking round the town of Assisi and showing himself to men as a humble and patient follower of His Master.

Seeds are gifts that contain a germ of life, of truth, of virtue. A look, a word, may be a seed fruitful of life to the heart into which it has been sown. A visit to a sick person, to a lonely and unhappy person, to a person neglected by others, to a person of naturally repulsive manners, appearance or nature, is the planting of a seed that may spring up and lead eventually to life everlasting. We cannot tell; we are not responsible for what happens to the seed after it has left our hand: we are responsible for having sown it, or for having withheld it through sloth, indifference, or want of faith in our mission.

How little responsible we may be for results is illustrated by the life of the Apostle St. Boniface, who left his English monastery to convert Germany, and then failed and returned; by the life of St. Louis, whom God inspired to undertake the conquest of the Holy Land, but not to succeed in it; by the lives of St. Francis of Assisi and of St. Anthony of Padua, who went by an inspiration of God to propagate the faith in the East, but

were after a time compelled to return to Italy *re infecta.* And so innumerable instances might be given of works undertaken by the servants of God under the Divine Will, and of their complete failure under the same Divine Will. God has proved to us a thousand times over, not only by His direct instruction in the Gospel, but by the examples of the Saints, that He is glorified by the goodwill, by the labours and sufferings, by the prayer and desire of His servants as much as by the glorious results that are so consoling when we behold them.

Health, Recreation, and Society.

True zeal must be tempered by discretion, and many ruin themselves by imprudence.

A Priest without experience of his powers and constitution must allow himself to be directed and moderated in activity.

The spiritual life may be missed by too much occupation *ad extra;* for if the body lives in a state of continual exhaustion and fatigue, the soul will suffer with the body. But you may say, "the work to be done is endless, and needs double my powers." That may be; but as God has given

you only a certain measure of strength, He does not desire that you should undertake more than that strength can accomplish. It is often a humbling thought that we have not strength to carry out our mission, that we must leave much undone and untouched, and that we must admit that we never shall be able to accomplish all that we desire.

Now here our consolation and happiness is to reflect that we have to do God's will and not our own, and that He does not desire that we should foolishly ruin our health.

But some persons are ever considering their health, and make it an excuse for neglecting their ordinary duties. St. Charles Borromeo used to say that a Priest having charge of souls ought not to take to his bed till after the third attack of fever.

Apostolic men are bound to expose their health, and their very lives, in the service of their flock. How many Priests must live in unhealthy atmospheres, in crowded dwellings, in small and inconvenient rooms, with poor food, and frequent exposure to the weather by night and by day, with long fastings, and constant intercourse with persons dying of contagious or other diseases.

Nothing was poorer or harder than the life of

Our Lord and His Apostles. So hungry were they at times, that they were forced to eat the ears of wheat in the fields through which they passed. *Usque in hanc horam et esurimus, et sitimus, et nudi sumus,* &c., says St. Paul to the Corinthians.

St. Teresa puts us on our guard against taking too great care of our health by recounting her own experience. She says in her Life [1]:—

"When the devil sees that we have some fear, he tries to persuade us that everything will kill us, or at least deprive us of our health."

Rest, Recreation, and Society.

The bow to be effective must not be always bent. All men need rest and recreation. The statesman, the lawyer, the physician—all men engaged habitually in work need rest and relaxation. It is a law of nature. The Priest, therefore, especially if engaged in continual work, needs his recreation. The work before him may be great as a sea; he may clearly realise the fact that it requires not only all his strength, but ten times his strength, in order to accomplish it. Still, there

[1] See "Life," xiii.

he is in face of nature: he can do so much and no more; his power is strictly limited.

Now, first of all, a zealous Priest, at least if his work lies in a town or a large mission, ought to take a few weeks' holiday every year. He needs this in order that he may give better service to God and to souls. The body requires rest and change in order to repair and strengthen its energies; the mind requires change and relaxation still more. Otherwise it is apt to become narrow, irritable, dull, and wooden. Spiritually, it is good to get away from one's work for a few weeks, in order to look at it from a distance, to see its proportions, and to review the whole situation. A man then returns to his round of labours and anxieties with renewed vigour, perhaps with new lights and suggestions; at all events he may come back with a certain buoyancy of spirits, which is good for body and soul—and all this tells upon his flock.

But one thing he must always bear in mind, viz., that he is always a Priest, that he carries Jesus with him, and that he can no more get rid of these facts than he can get rid of himself. He will therefore ever wear the ecclesiastical dress; he will go to no place, and be found in no

company, and take part in no pleasure or amusement unbecoming the character of the Apostolic man. This simple rule will answer a multitude of questions, and will effectually bar the path of the devil, who hopes through change of circumstances to throw the Priest off his guard, and to lead him unsuspiciously into sin.

Again, the young Priest should be on his guard against the advances, innocent advances, sometimes made by young persons of the opposite sex, who desire to give him pleasure and amusement, and to provide everything that may be needful for journeys and visits to foreign places. The reputation of a Priest is most sacred, and he distinctly jeopardises it if he be seen travelling and going about alone with young ladies, whether married or single. That which cannot be done with perfect propriety according to the laws of society, must not be attempted by a Priest on the strength of his Orders.

But besides an annual rest and vacation, it is usually a good rule to take a holiday once a week. Steady work needs a break, and one day of rest in every seven is according to the divine as well as the natural law. There is true economy in this. The Priest will be all the fresher and fitter for his

pastoral work during six days if he has refreshed himself by a change or a rest during one day in the week. To have a fixed day for a rest will be a decided reason against that habit of wasting many days in the week which is generally contracted by people who do not take their rest and recreation systematically.

What a Priest has to guard against is this most fatal habit of considering that he is always free to amuse himself when the daily sick calls have been attended to. The fact is that his time is not really his own. It belongs to his Master: he is a servant, and he has promised to serve his Master *corde magno et animo volente.* He "must be about his Master's business." And what an amount of business that is with which he has been entrusted!—the children, the parents, the indifferent and bad Catholics, the non-Catholics, the various works and interests connected with the mission or with souls, his own studies, sermons, catechisms, and prayers: all these form an amount of business which can never be fully discharged, even had a Priest herculean strength and a constitution that needed no repose. Then let a Priest take his weekly holiday without scruple or hesitation, and recreate himself thoroughly; but

let him then apply himself seriously to the ministry during six days in the week, and not allow himself to be drawn away from his mission at other times, unless it be exceptionally, and for a particular reason. Each day a Priest requires some rest or distraction, and it is good when Priests living in the same house can meet together for a little society and distraction after dinner or when the work of the day is over. What has to be guarded against is the habit of continually going out and spending long hours in the houses of the laity. Some seculars are flattered or amused by the Priest's society; some take a certain pleasure in drawing him down to their own level, and make his tastes and his conduct a subject of conversation as soon as his back is turned. We do not say that a Priest is to refuse all invitations, but we do say that it is a matter that needs a wise discretion. Our Lord Himself took part in the marriage feast of Cana, and on more than one occasion He sat down to eat with publicans and sinners, whose souls he desired to convert.

But if a Priest goes out from time to time to public charity dinners or to gatherings in private houses, he should remember the Diocesan law as to returning home early, and the well-ascertained

fact that the laity are far more edified by the regularity of a Priest who lives by rule than they are gratified by his yielding to their pressure to prolong his stay in their society late into the night.

There is no doubt that the zealous Priest has a difficult part to play, especially in a country like England. On the one hand, it is of great importance that he should be known to the Catholic laity and be on friendly and intimate terms with many of them. It is well that he should meet non-Catholics and break down certain prejudices by social intercourse. One element of strength and ground of hope for the Church in England is the good feeling and mutual confidence existing between the clergy and laity, and a certain limited amount of social intercourse tends to maintain this.

On the other hand, if it be desirable that he be known, it is far more desirable that he be known as the Apostolic Priest, as the Man of God. He has no right to throw off this character and to pose as a reckless, frivolous man of the world. While the Priest should be perfectly natural and without affectation, he must be careful to observe the laws of good society, thoughtfulness for others,

tact to avoid giving needless pain, a desire to give pleasure, willingness to render service, and due reserve and respect for others. He must be human as well as Christian, and not bring a mere rough and rustic piety into the society of those who are educated and refined.

Let him have before his mind the example of Our Blessed Lord in all his intercourse with men; he will then never fail to serve his Master on the occasions when it is desirable for him to mix in the society of men.

The Apostolic Priest on a Small Mission.

Importance of Systematic Work.

A Priest hears that "the harvest is great and the labourers few," and he desires to be sent into the harvest, that he may reap and gather in with both hands. But instead of this he is sent to a small mission, where the number of Catholics is insignificant and very scattered, and the means of subsistence are small and precarious. He says to himself: "Then has it come to this, that I am a Priest with nothing to do? That others are in the thick of the work, and I am to be little better

than a drone? How shall I spin out my days, how shall I kill the time that will hang heavy upon me? It is clear that God does not require much of me, or He would have given me a more important field of work."

These difficulties, which may be raised either by the human or by the diabolical spirit, deserve an answer; and they should be met from the outset in the Apostolic spirit of faith.

And first, the Catholic Church in England is as an army in campaign, endeavouring to take possession of the whole country. She has many outposts that must be occupied. She advances here and there, and plants herself in localities which she wishes to conquer and hold. Soldiers engaged on outpost duty, and in the defence of isolated positions, have many trials to undergo, but they render service quite as important to the cause as do those of their comrades who are stationed in great camps or are engaged in battle. It was by multiplying outposts and bringing personal influence to bear upon the *pagani*, the scattered inhabitants of the country, that the Church converted the rural populations; and it must be the same now.

If, then, you are sent by your Bishop to an

obscure and small mission, remember that it is the Lord Himself who has told you off for this service: *Posui vos ut eatis.*

Secondly, What are you to do? How are you to spend your time? Suppose you have a little flock of only twenty or thirty souls.

1. Your first duty will be to look after them. If one of them is neglected, you will not be able to plead want of time as an excuse. You have not only to snatch those souls out of the clutches of the devil and the meshes of sin, but to sanctify them. And you know that God is the more glorified by how much the greater the height of sanctity to which a soul is raised. A Priest who has led one soul to a life of heroic sanctity has done more for God and the Church than another who has done no more than just keep a number of souls within the Church.

2. In the second place, God has sent you into a dark place, in which the light of the true faith has been extinguished since the sixteenth century. He has sent you to be *lumen ad revelationem gentium.* You are to be the light of the town, of the countryside, of the place to which the Lord has sent you: *vos estis lumen mundi.* You are, moreover, intended to be the salt and savour

of the people: *vos estis sal terrae.* The fact that you are young, or delicate, or without any extraordinary ability or gifts, does not destroy the fact that you are *lumen mundi, sal terrae.* We must deal with the supernatural and with God, not with the mere natural and the common ways of the world. *Manete in Me et ego in vobis. Posui vos ut eatis.*

And how are you to carry out your mission, and become the light of God to the neighbourhood, and salt to season the lives of men?

You must first realise that this really is your mission; for unless you realise this, you will never have the heart or the perseverance needful for its accomplishment. *Intellectus cogitabundus*, &c. For this, prayer is necessary, as well as a careful examination of the appropriate steps to be taken.

Next, you will determine in what way you may best make yourself known to the non-Catholic population, and gain their confidence and goodwill.

Kindliness, sympathy in sickness and trouble, interest in their affairs, little services gladly rendered, familiar conversation about their welfare, the prospects of their children, &c., will open a door to human hearts. Our Blessed Lord Himself

won souls by His human sympathies, by the cures He wrought, and by the attention and care He gave, for instance, to little children, and to the afflicted. A Priest, if not naturally sympathetic, must train himself to become so, by taking cases and devoting himself to them. It is surprising how open people, especially the poor, are to sympathy and kind looks and words. But they need time and patience, and a Priest who is in a hurry with them will fail, because they will feel that he does not consider them worth his time, and that he does not really care for them or he would give them time.

To take part in public work—*e.g.*, by becoming a Guardian of the Poor, a Member of the District or Parish Council, or by attending meetings that concern the general welfare—is a useful way of becoming favourably known to the people.

A missionary Priest can never be without an Apostolic object—without souls upon whom to work, so long as there are people round about him. If the Priest says to himself: "Here are souls outside the Church; I am sent to them. I must spend myself in winning them; I must sit down and examine the means which offer the best chance. If I can't convert them at

once, I may by degrees break down the wall of separation. I can remove first one, then another prejudice; I can give them first one, then another Catholic truth. If I can't instruct the whole population, I can one or two members of it; if I can get at units, progress will be made, for the whole is made up of units. If, when I leave, I shall have reaped no harvest, I ought to be conscious of having laboured to prepare the soil, of having sown the seed. Some seed lies buried long, and is slow in coming up; and, after all, 'neither he that planteth is anything, nor he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase.'" But perhaps the Priest or his friends come in with the plea of "common sense," and urge that there is nothing to be done; that the people are hard, materialist, thoroughly prejudiced, and anti-Catholic, or absolutely indifferent to religious truth, or completely under the sway of their preachers and ministers. But this proves, not that there is nothing, but much more, to be done. St. Paul wrote to Timothy that "there shall be a time when they shall not endure sound doctrine; but according to their own desires they will heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears, and will turn away their hearing from the truth, but

will be turned unto fables" (2 Tim. iv. 3). What is this but a description of the state of England, in every particular?

If "common sense" or "an easy life" says, "Give it up, you will make no headway against such odds," the Holy Ghost gives a very different and opposite direction, and at once meets the deplorable defection by crying out in the imperative voice—*Tu vero vigila, in omnibus labora, opus fac Evangelistae, ministerium tuum imple. Sobrius esto.* Each one of these words deserves to be pondered and acted upon.

A great encouragement to work against even the heaviest odds is the thought that the glory to God and the gain to our own souls are measured, not by our visible successes, but by our efforts, and the charity which has informed them. This has been sufficiently dwelt on in the chapter on the Apostolic life.

Finally, there is one other instrument of supernatural power in the Priest's hands which we have not spoken of. He wields the power of prayer. He is a man of Prayer, a man of God: with a right to approach God such as Moses had. He is bound to plead for the people; he stands between God and the souls of men.

Now can it be said that the Priest has done all that an earnest mediator can do when he has said his Mass, given benediction, recited some prayers, and administered the sacraments? Of course in these things he has been acting ministerially as mediator, whether he adverted to the fact or not. But if he be really in earnest, will he not turn his intention deliberately to the prayer of intercession? Will he not spend some time every day before the Blessed Sacrament thinking over and praying for the various classes of souls in his district? When a religious person ardently desires some great grace or blessing, he devotes time and zeal to pray for it: he pleads earnestly with God; he adds mortifications and good works to his prayer; he enlists all whom he can influence to unite with him in prayer. It was thus that the Abbé Desgenettes converted thousands, and turned the church of Notre Dame into a flourishing sanctuary. It was thus M. Olier acted when he converted the district of St. Sulpice; it was thus the Curé d'Ars acted—prayer for the salvation of souls forming a great part of the occupation of his life. And may we in England, with our poor human resources, with our uphill work, with every worldly odds against us, dispense ourselves from a life of earnest prayer as

part of our Apostolic resources? Can we expect miracles of grace if we fail to comport ourselves as Apostolic men? But it is the effort, the uncertainty, the fatigue, or, let us say it, it is our want of faith and our sensuality which shirks persevering labour, which keeps us back and reconciles us to a course of conduct and effort that differs in nothing from that of an ordinarily good layman. It is not thus that England will be converted, and that we shall reach the high standard to which God has called us.

On the other hand, the Priest who is in earnest and prays, who wrestles with God for the salvation of souls, is respected and heard by God. Jesus Christ recognises him as being His own image, as well as His representative. Not only in the Mass does he implore light and grace for sinners, but at night, when all is still and the church is empty, he spends his time in the sanctuary, like Jesus in the cave of Gethsamani, where "He began to grow sorrowful and to be sad," saying, "My soul is sorrowful even unto death: stay you here and watch with Me." Here, under the still shades of night, unseen by men, but under the very eyes of His Lord, he endures his agony of sorrow for sin, and strives for the salvation of the perishing souls to

whom he has been sent. Oh, what graces, what lights, what consolations, what conquests are thus achieved! Where this is the life of the Priest his failures are only apparent: God's honour, his own merit, how they grow and expand beyond human measurement! and the salvation of souls is secured according to God's wisdom and providence.

CONFERENCE X.

AFFABILITY, GENTLENESS, TACT.

DISCITE A ME QUIA MITIS SUM.
—*Ex communi Apostolorum.*

AFFABILITY, gentleness, and tact are not the great virtues which are written down as essential for salvation; but they are, all the same, much needed in the ministers of the Gospel in dealing with souls. They are needed not merely as adornments and aids, but they are necessary to this extent, that without them a Priest will often fail to carry out his ministry, and he loses souls whom he might have sanctified and saved, because he has fatally alienated them.

A fly spoils the ointment. A particle of grit destroys the efficiency of the best and most costly piece of mechanism. A single spark may end in a conflagration. An act, a word, a look—neglect and want of thought may neutralise in the most astonishing and saddest way the influence of many sterling virtues when it comes to dealing with individual characters. It often happens that

splendid undertakings, great works of zeal, are frustrated by nothing more than want of tact. Men and women might be brought to contribute invaluable resources of personal service, and to make sacrifices of another kind in behalf of religion, but, through not being properly approached, they hold aloof and refuse to co-operate, fearing to be pained. People who might be brought on to love and practise their religion remain outside, because there is no affability, no encouraging word, no cheery and inviting smile to welcome their advance. The soul often shuts up like those flowers that close the moment the sun ceases to shine on them. It may be very irrational, very foolish, but so it is; and we have to take human nature, not as it should be, but as we find it.

We have to remember that to bring souls to deny themselves, to live by faith, to love and serve God and His Church, is a very delicate and difficult matter. It is not like dealing with worldly interests—the pursuit of riches, of power, of knowledge—where earthly and carnal reasons are on the side of human nature. In persuading people to give themselves to a spiritual and religious life, we are at great disadvantage; the enemies of salvation combine against us, we have no weapons

but such as are spiritual and invisible: we depend almost entirely upon the favour and goodwill of those to whom we address ourselves.

Want of affability, of gentleness, and of tact is, therefore, capable of defeating all our endeavours; and our possession of even heroic virtue will often be powerless to counteract this defect.

College and seminary training does not always ensure affability, gentleness, and tact. Sometimes quite the contrary. The roughness and rudeness of some, the somewhat violent way of dealing with eccentricities and angularities by others, the levelling and democratic spirit which often pervades a community, and the superfluous health and energy that has but little sensitiveness, and is boisterous and reckless in its way of carrying on—all this, without speaking of the home manners of some, may turn out a Priest, for English or for foreign missions, singularly devoid of those particular qualifications which are here under consideration.

A phlegmatic or a bilious temperament may easily generate morose, coarse, and boorish manners; as a sanguine temperament may run to tactless and provoking excesses that may be equally mischievous. Where there has been

defective home training in habits of self-restraint and self-denial, in consideration for the feelings and wishes of others, and in a desire to give pleasure and to render service, the deficiency will be made good later on only by religious considerations; and they will come as the efflorescence and bloom of the Christian virtues of meekness, humility, and charity, as taught by our Blessed Lord to His Apostles.

Affability, gentleness, and tact are frequently referred to, as we should suppose they would be in the Office of Apostles, under terms and virtues that imply their existence and practice. *Discite a Me quia mitis sum et humilis corde* is, Learn of Me to be affable, gentle, considerate for others, not with an appearance of artificial condescension, but as sympathetically feeling with those who may be inferior to you.

Hoc est præceptum meum ut diligatis invicem sicut dilexi vos: How did He love us? With most extraordinary affability; with such gentleness that the bruised straw He would not break, and the smoking flax he would not extinguish; with such tactfulness that He always said the right word at the right moment, that He knew exactly when to praise, when to encourage, when to

rebuke, and to denounce even in the strongest language; and at the same time He loved with all His heart, with strength and perseverance unto the end.

Ecce ego mitto vos sicut oves in medio luporum, He sent His Apostles into the world of men, who are selfish, unjust, cruel—tearing each other's character to pieces like wolves, ever seeking for the mastery and for the gratification of their savage appetites. He sent them into the world to be the very opposite of all this—to be gentle, tractable, patient as sheep.

This affable and gentle character we are to cultivate, if we would become like unto Our Lord and His Apostles, the Breviary brings out in these words:—

Maledicimur, et benedicimus;
Persecutionem patimur, et sustinemus;
Blasphemamur et obsecramus.

Non ut confundam vos haec scribo, sed ut filios meos carissimos moneo: I say not this to discourage you, but to show you how you also ought to be affable and gentle, and the very opposite in disposition and conduct of those into whose midst you are sent.

We are harassed and tempted by many inor-

dinate affections and ill humours, even while we live in a state of grace. They hinder our Apostolic work and influence in the most serious manner; and therefore the Office again warns us: *Inimici hominis domestici ejus. Qui ergo propter fidem Christi et praedicationem Evangelii omnes affectus contempserint, isti centum recipient et vitam aeternam possidebunt.* Our worst enemy is often within our own selves; but if we control and pay no heed to those sallies of feeling, to those signs of the savage which are within us, and do this *propter fidem Christi et praedicationem Evangelii,* out of love for the Christian faith and for the spread of the Gospel throughout the world, we shall be repaid a hundred times over even in this life, besides securing our claim to a happy eternity.

Gentleness is no sign of weakness, but of strength held in reserve. It is a proof of discipline and self-control. The untrained horse is rough and violent, but when broken becomes gentle, serviceable, and capable of prolonged and great exertion.

We do not expect gentleness in the savage, or in the undisciplined. It is a result of civilisation. It is astonishing to note what self-

restraint, what pain, annoyance, and inconvenience people in society will endure, without a sign of impatience, in order to satisfy some social requirement. They "suffer far more to please the world than many of us do to win souls."

All nations are agreed in considering the gentle man and the gentle woman as the types of civilised humanity. A "gentleman" means one who is practised in habits of self-restraint, in consideration for the feelings and desires of others, and is therefore gentle in manner and conduct.

What the world produces as a veneer, becomes the substance and life of the soul, in the perfect disciple of Christ. Gentleness, affability, and tact are the bloom of Christian charity.

St. Vincent of Paul tells us that when he was a young Priest engaged in looking after prisoners condemned to the galleys, he found that he made a very unfavourable impression upon the family with whom he lodged. He was of a bilious temperament, and had a natural manner which made him, he says, hard and dry as a briar. Often a sort of gloomy coldness and silence would take possession of him, so that people feared they had given him some offence. Per-

ceiving, after a time, that giving way to these natural feelings hindered the progress of his work, and reflecting that such a character is fatal to the influence of a good Superior, he set about the work of self-reformation. "I began by addressing myself to God, and earnestly besought Him to change my dry and repulsive character and to make me gentle and kind. And by His grace, with the little attention I paid to repressing these manifestations of nature, I succeeded in getting rid a little of my black humour."

It is a mistake to suppose that we are affable and gentle because we do not spring upon our victim as a tiger, or growl at him like a savage dog. We must take care not to betray ourselves by looks, or a studiedly cold manner, or by a morose and provoking silence.

"While under the influence of anger and of feelings of annoyance, we must make a great effort to prevent any mark of our displeasure appearing in our manner, or on our countenance, which is the image of the soul. On the contrary, we must try to establish the reign of Christian sweetness and affability. This is not to act with duplicity nor to sin against simplicity. We make these efforts, not in order to appear

to others to be different from what we are, but urged by a strong desire to make that virtue of charity and kindliness, which resides in the superior part of the soul, overflow our countenance, our words and actions, in order thereby to give pleasure to God—*quoniam tu, Domine, suavis et mitis*—and to our neighbour for the love of God."

There are good Priests who are repulsive and detestable simply because they show no sympathy or interest in persons who come to them—especially if they are poor, ignorant, ill-mannered or otherwise unattractive, or if they come at an inconvenient moment.

There are some who are nearly always black and surly. This often proceeds from health, and a dose of blue pill will be found to facilitate the action of grace, if they become aware of how disagreeable they are, and have a desire to remedy this defect.

As people of the world put on smiles, and use pleasant words of welcome and kindness, because society would never work smoothly were every one to give way to his humour, and to receive his acquaintances on the particular kind of bristle that he was inclined to display that day, so must

the servant of God do violence to his temper, his selfishness, and his melancholy, and learn of his Lord to be meek, gentle, and sympathetic. The gift of sympathy goes further in winning souls than learning or any other gift. As no gift we can make to God will satisfy Him if we withhold our hearts, so nothing is more grateful to men than a sympathetic friend.

We must encourage ourselves to the practice of these little virtues by the thought of the extraordinary influence they exercise, and, above all, by the reflection that as Apostolic men and Priests we belong not to ourselves, and do not in any way represent ourselves; but that we belong entirely to Jesus Christ, and are His chosen representatives. We may ask ourselves, "What would Jesus Christ, say, how would He behave were He now in my place?" When we feel thoroughly out-of-sorts and in a regular bad humour, and still have to deal with people, whether equals or inferiors, we may begin by saying to ourselves, "Well, I have plenty of sins to do penance for, and insignificant are my voluntary penances; I will therefore take this as a penance, and will put on a smile and a cheery manner, and will begin by saying something pleasant or kind." Or

we may say, "I am representing my gentle and loving Saviour; it won't do, therefore, to inflict upon this person my own disagreeable and hateful manners." A good beginning of this sort will often turn on a good humour, and the bad will go under. But if the bad humour should get the upper hand again in word or in manner, it will become much easier to revert to a smile or a graceful expression of sympathy and kindness, when the need of this is perceived, than it would be had no good beginning been made.

St. Vincent of Paul, who had so much to do with people of all classes, continually urged the members of his Society to become gentle and affable with every one. He said:—

"In the first place, not to be taken by surprise, we should try and foresee the occasions on which we may be tempted to be disagreeable, impatient or angry; and make beforehand good resolutions, and interior acts of the required virtue.

"Secondly, we should detest the vice of anger and selfish habits that are morose and painful to others, because they displease God. And if we fall into them, we must not worry, but simply conceive a sweet and peaceful sorrow, and look to God for fresh assistance.

"Thirdly, when we feel angry, it is best not to act or even to speak; above all, not to come to a decision until the feelings of anger have subsided. Actions and resolutions decided upon when the mind is agitated are not absolutely under the guidance of reason, which is then more or less troubled and darkened by passion. And hence, though they should seem at the time to be just and good, they will be lacking some perfection, and should not, therefore, be fully trusted.

"Fourthly, whenever we are angry or irritated let us hold our tongue, and this in spite of the conviction that our feelings of anger are justifiable. We must on such occasions say absolutely nothing but what is gentle and sweet. A single sweet and gentle expression has been enough to convert a hardened sinner, whereas a rough or biting remark has been known to bring desolation to a soul, and to cause a rankling bitterness that has been most injurious."

This great missioner used to say that on three occasions he remembered using violent language in correcting others, thinking at the time that such was needed; but that he had always repented of having done so, because he found that this method was not blessed with success, and

that he was generally able to attain his end by kindness and conciliatory manners.

He held that this gentleness and sweetness are particularly necessary in dealing with poor and ill-educated persons. "Otherwise," he said, "they fear to approach us, thinking us either too austere, or too grand for them. But if we treat them with kindness and cordiality they conceive quite other feelings towards us, and become well disposed to profit by our services. Now as God has called us to minister to the poor, we ought to do this in the way that will most profit them, and that is by being truly kind, gentle, and sympathetic with them."

Speaking of the success of his Fathers in giving Missions, St. Vincent said:—

"If God has abundantly blessed our Missions, this has been because we acted with kindness, humbly and openly towards all sorts of people. When God has made use of the most miserable among us to convert heretics, they have themselves owned up that they had come into the church because of his patience and cordiality with them.

"The men at the galleys with whom I lived were won in no other way. When I spoke to

them dryly everything was spoilt; but when I sympathised with them in their sufferings, praised their resignation, said they were privileged to go through their purgatory in this life, kissed their chains out of compassion, showing affection for them in their misery, it was then that they listened to me, gave glory to God, and placed themselves in a state of salvation.

"I beg of you to help me to give God thanks for this, and to beseech Him to teach all Missioners to treat their poor neighbour with sweetness, humility, and charity both in public and in private—and to behave in this way even towards the most hardened sinners. Never use invective, reproaches, or biting or sarcastic expressions to any one. They repel instead of attracting, and embitter and send people o a distance.

"Our Lord Jesus Christ is the eternal sweetness of men and angels, and it is by this virtue of His sweetness that we ought to lead souls to Him."

No man ever carried out so many and such difficult works as St. Vincent during his long life. His principle always was, having once made up his mind to undertake a work in God's service, to pursue the end in view with indomitable deter-

mination and perseverance; but to use gentleness and sweetness, as most important instruments to success. In this he was guided by the wise man: *qui attingit a fine usque ad finem fortiter, et disponit omnia suaviter* (Wisdom viii. 1). He reacheth from end to end mightily—that is, with his irresistible strength; but it is by sweetly and gently using the measures adapted for the purpose. Hence the saying, *Suaviter in modo, fortiter in re.*

People sometimes imagine that their dignity or their rights are ignored, and think that straight away they must stand up for their dignity and assert their rights. Oh, how much harm is done to the cause of God by hasty contentions of this sort! Granted that you have rights, you do not renounce them because you do not choose on certain occasions to use them.

St. Francis Xavier said that the conversion of souls was a matter of far greater moment than the assertion of rights, which are in reality granted for the benefit of souls, and should not be used to their injury.

CONFERENCE XI.

THE PRIEST IN PARTNERSHIP WITH JESUS CHRIST.

DIRIGERE ET SANCTIFICARE, REGERE ET GUBERNARE DIGNARE, DOMINE DEUS, REX COELI ET TERRAE, HODIE, CORDA ET CORPORA NOSTRA, SENSUS, SERMONES ET ACTUS NOSTROS.

—*Ex communi Apostolorum.*

SECTION I.—THREE KINDS OF PARTNERS.

OUR Blessed Lord determined not to undertake alone the work of the sanctification and salvation of mankind, but He called men into partnership with Himself in order to accomplish it. He had no need of our help: *non eget alicujus consilio; bonorum meorum non eges.* Still He willed to take a certain number of us into partnership, and to say, *Ego elegi vos.*

You have recently been admitted to the privilege of being specially associated with Him by the sacred unction of ordination. And you have, therefore, been brought face to face with the

question, What kind of a partner are you going to be? There are three types, and you must fall under one or other of them. Under which shall it be?

1. First, there is the partner who starts by saying: "I am willing to bind myself to do what the canons clearly define as obligatory. I enter into a contract. I will fulfil my contract; that done, I hold myself free, for the rest, to do as I please." He is resolved to commit no grievous offence, to incur no reproach, no disgrace; he is prepared to act up to the terms of his contract, and to make good his claim to profit and reward. But he will not go beyond the contract; to do so would be to give more than he is prepared to surrender.

I apprise the merit and value of this to be as copper.

2. Next, there is another type, that of a Priest who heartily throws whatever he possesses—all his energies and talents, all his time, all his capital—into the concern. He intends to hold back nothing. He takes up the ecclesiastical life enthusiastically, makes all its interests his own. He initiates, plans, executes; is never happier than when engaged in some absorbing and difficult

task that taxes all his strength; he has no thought of sparing himself, if he can only serve the Church and feel that he has done credit to himself.

If now and then a project in which he had embarked with generosity fail, he feels that he can count upon the goodwill of an indulgent partner. If it succeed, he is proud to think that he has added something to the wealth or the credit of his business, which is also that of Our Blessed Lord, whose partner he is.

He is naturally enterprising, active, energetic, rich perhaps in expedients, with an eye always on the end he proposes to attain. Every one can see how absorbed he is. Everywhere his will, his judgment, his personality, make themselves felt. He is, certainly, the responsible, the working partner, and he feels this at every step. He never spares himself.

We should say of such a man that he would become the ornament of any profession he might be in; that he would certainly win its prizes, if he did not become its leader. He need not be a man of prayer, or be led by faith, or have any care for the supernatural, for grace or a future state. He might succeed in the natural order, make a

name and a fortune in this world, without belief even in God.

But every one entering into partnership with Christ needs more than natural gifts and qualifications in order to give satisfaction. It will be just in proportion to the way in which the old man dies, and a new man rises, just in proportion to the way in which a man becomes supernaturalised, and puts on Christ's mind, Christ's aim, and Christ's life, that he will succeed in God's service, and be recognised and rewarded as a partner in Our Lord's work.

A Priest may take up the ecclesiastical career as a pagan takes up a worldly profession, finding his livelihood, his comfort, his honour, and generally his welfare, in the discharge of its duties. The mere exercise of his faculties may be all that he requires for their satisfaction. We must beware of self-deception. We must examine our activities, our energies, and ascertain whether we are living a mere natural life, a life that has self-gratification its main end, or whether we have bridled our energies, having them under control, whether we supernaturalise them, subjecting them in all things to the Divine Will.

You will sometimes see a Priest begin life with

apparently great zeal and energy—and he may appear devotedness personified. But if trials, disappointments, temptations change his character for the worse, you will soon see that nature, not grace, has the upper hand. A man's thoughts, judgments, conversation, and conduct reveal the spirit that works and lives within him.

At the same time, many a Priest enters upon his partnership with Christ with nature and nature's energies so strong within him that he seems to dominate the position, and to treat Our Lord as a sleeping partner. There is nothing very alarming in this—if he be on his guard against himself. Humility and prayer, and greater light from the Holy Ghost, are what he needs in order to attain that perfection which he is called to reach in course of time and *tunsione plurima.* We may estimate the value of his life as that of silver.

3. There is yet a third type of partner. He also casts everything that he has into the concern. But he takes up an attitude entirely different from that of the preceding two. He argues thus:—

"It is most gracious and condescending of Christ to have called such a sinner as I am into partnership with Himself. To allow me to second His

designs and to work with Him, and then to promise me, as a reward, a personal share in His life and His kingdom, is beyond all imagination honourable and delightful.

"Then all the knowledge, experience, and power required to deal with the problems and work of this '*ars artium regimen animarum*' are in reality on His side, not on mine.

"My own ignorance and weakness are such that, personally, I am far more likely to mar than to advance the transcendent interests that are at stake; I am so liable to be deceived by the glitter, the false principles and maxims of the world, and to be tempted, I know not when or how, by evil spirits. I am such a mystery to myself, so many seasons and moods passing over my soul, so many tastes and inclinations struggling and warring within me, that I can have no kind of confidence in myself. And therefore I cannot dare to undertake this work on my own account, in my own name, or in my own strength.

"I cannot," he says, "regard this business as one in which Christ is the sleeping partner, who has retired from active work and left the management of affairs to me. On the contrary, He is keenly interested in everything, desires to be consulted on

every project, and to take a part in every undertaking. He desires to be the inspiration and life of everything."

It is not that Christ is unwilling to leave any initiative, suggestion, or field of exertion to His partner. He knows man's nature, for He made it. He bids His partner use all his talents and gifts of forethought, calculating the proportion of the means to the end, and carefully drawing out plans that seem likely to attain success. But then He desires that all this should be definitely brought before Him. He desires that His frail and inexperienced human partner should undertake nothing without reference to the Divine Will and judgment. The whole position is admirably summed up in the words from the Breviary, which the Church makes us repeat day by day: "*Dirigere et sanctificare, regere et gubernare, Domine Deus. Rex coeli et terrae, hodie, corda et corpora nostra, sensus, sermones et actus nostros in lege tua et in operibus mandatorum tuorum.*"

Thus it appears, not as a matter of supererogation or of counsel, but as a settled law of grace, that our partner Christ, who is *Rex coeli et terrae,* is to direct, and so to sanctify, to rule, and so to govern during the whole day, *hodie,* our hearts with their

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affections, our bodies with their energies—our senses, words, and actions. And in like manner, in the Thanksgiving prescribed after celebrating Mass, the Priest prays every day, *Ut cuncta nostra oratio et operatio a Te semper incipiat, et per Te semper finiatur.* So that the Church recognises no other relation between Christ and ourselves than that of complete and continuous dependence on our part upon His will. That we should assume, even for an hour, any other position, would be, to say the least of it, an intolerable impertinence. We are indeed partners, but we must be as instruments in His hand, to be used by Him to carry out His own great designs of mercy to men. The more completely and unresistingly we place ourselves as instruments which He is to wield, the more completely shall we become identified with Him in all things. Christ, therefore, in the most absolute sense, is the predominant partner, whose influence is to flow into the whole of our life. The life of a Priest striving to live up to this standard may truly be esteemed as of the value of gold.

No man, short of a miracle, can attain to this perfection at once. It is no child's play. It is the work of years, and, above all, it is the work of grace. But the bestowal of this grace is an affair

of absolute certainty, if we only continue ardently to desire and to pray for it. The Holy Ghost has pledged Himself to accomplish within us that which depends upon Him. Have constant recourse to the Blessed Virgin, in whom Jesus Christ was formed by the power of the Holy Ghost, and you will experience, as others have done, the effect of her maternal care of your soul.

Section II.—Encouraging Examples.

The Saints offer us many encouraging and easy examples as to what should be the state of mind and the conduct of a man who has entered into partnership with Jesus Christ.

St. Ignatius of Loyola was certainly a man of initiative and of action, if ever there were one. Now he took care, in the first place, to deliberately bring every course, every action of importance, before his Divine partner, and to inquire of Him, in prayer and meditation, as well as by taking counsel, whether what he proposed to himself was to the glory, and "to the *greater* glory" of God.

When St. John of the Cross first gave himself to

the service of God—that is, when he first entered into partnership—he resolved to ask himself continually this question: "What would Our Lord Jesus Christ think, say, or do, were He now in my place?" And the practice led to the closest uniformity of his will with that of Christ.

St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi never tired of repeating to all under her: "To arrive at great perfection in a short time, do everything with the deliberate intention of doing the Divine Will. This intention strips us of self-will, and sanctifies all our works." To say "the will of God" was enough to transport her into an ecstasy; and at last, even the mere sound of these words made the acutest physical pain easy of endurance. But, strange as it may seem to say so, this is a matter of almost daily experience. A man is mad with the piercing pain, for instance, of an aching nerve. He applies to it, as it were, a plaster of the will of God, by slowly and patiently repeating the words "the holy will of God," or *Deo gratias.* Presently relief is brought to the troubled spirit, and even to the throbbing pain.

The suffering human partner has brought himself into uniformity with the will of the predominant partner, and there distils from this an inward

joy and peace, which counteracts and diminishes, if it does not banish, much of the restless pain.

St. Vincent of Paul speaks of the exercise whereby we conform ourselves to the will of our Divine partner, as the *Christian's treasury*. It contains, as theologians say, *eminenter*, all virtues, such as self-denial, patience, obedience, indifference of creatures, the imitation of Christ, union with God. He called it the distinguishing virtue of Apostolic men, and therefore it especially deserves your close attention.

The same Saint laid down the following rule for Apostolic men: "Among a multitude of thoughts and plans that come to the mind, many are good in appearance, though they are not from God. What must we, then, do to avoid delusion? We must examine them leisurely, carry them to God in prayer, seek His light. Consider the motive, the end, the means to be adopted, and then ask ourselves, are these likely to be pleasing to God? We must seek advice, particularly the advice of our Director and of our Superiors."

Evidently St. Vincent never imagined that Christ's Apostles were to be found in any but the third kind of partnership. In one of his conferences with Priests, he said: "I am sure

there is not one here who has not tried to-day to perform some actions that are good in themselves, and yet it is possible that God may have no regard to those actions, because they were the fruit of self-will. For twenty years I have always been much troubled when reading these words of Isaias, quoted in the Liturgy: 'Why have we fasted and Thou hast not regarded? Behold, in the day of your fast your own will is found.' And what is said of fasting may be said of other good works; they may all be tainted and ruined by self-will.

"What, then, must we do, not to lose our time and our labour? We must be on our guard against self-will, human inclinations, and fancies; and accustom ourselves to seek and to do God's will in all things. I say 'in all things,' and not partially or in some only. In this way, grace will render both the person and the action pleasing to God." One of the servant of God's sayings was this: "It needs but little to become a Saint. The sovereign and the only way is to form the habit of doing the Divine Will in all things. This will make you a Saint."

Be not discouraged, saying, "This is all very well for Saints, but for such as I am it is out

of the question." This practice was not a consequence of their sanctity, but a practice that preceded their sanctity, and which led them by degrees to become Saints. A habit of this kind would be more than we could acquire by ourselves. But by reflection and a little study of the spiritual life, we can persuade ourselves of its necessity; we can then begin by God's grace to deserve it; and then, if we pray to obtain the gift, and try to exercise ourselves a little in it each day, the Holy Ghost will assuredly do the rest. Our Divine partner will not abandon us if we pay Him the only ordinary courtesy of consulting His will and pleasure in a life which, after all, is His, because He has chosen us to be His own Apostles.

CONFERENCE XII.

PRAYER, AN APOSTOLIC WORK.

REGEM APOSTOLORUM DOMINUM, VENITE, ADOREMUS.
—*Ex communi Apostolorum.*

THE two works essential to the Apostolic career are Prayer and the Ministry. "*Nos autem orationi et ministerio verbi instantes erimus.*" But "we will give ourselves continually to PRAYER, and to the MINISTRY of the Word" (Acts vi.). We shall never be Apostolic men unless we are men of prayer. We may deceive ourselves and others by spending and exhausting ourselves in labours and external works, but unless we are men of prayer we shall not find ourselves in the company of the Apostles.

The habit of prayer is formed by degrees. You must not expect to be at the beginning of your career what you will become by the end of it. The life of prayer is the work of grace and of co-operation. Every one can attain to it if he will, because prayer and the habit of prayer is one of

the common graces which God offers to every one. But you will not obtain the gift in spite of yourself, but by getting to realise its importance and its power, then by desires to acquire it, and then by efforts, prudent and persevering, to grow in the practice of it.

When a man is suddenly struck for the first time by the discovery that he is really the object of the love of Jesus Christ, a new light bursts upon him. And it is not surprising if the awakening to this conviction is like a *coup d'état*, and creates a revolution. To know that Jesus Christ, Our God, is madly in love with our soul —with our soul which we think so little of ourself—that He cares for us like a Father; dotes on us like a Mother; finds His pleasure and delight in our company like a Lover; and that He has valued His own life simply as nothing in order to win our love and confidence—to know and realise this opens up an entirely new vista in our existence. But He has laid the Apostolic man under still deeper obligations. He has not only lived and died to win his affection, but He has delivered over into his hands and keeping His own mission and work for souls. He has made Himself personally and His honour, the business

and the glory of His eternal Father, in some measure dependent upon the life and conduct of this favoured man. And He has done this with a generosity such as neither the provoking frivolities of our life nor the cold stream of our ingratitude can abate. *Nec flumina obruent eam.*

Under this new conviction the converted and grateful soul scans the history of the Life and Passion of Jesus with new eyes, discovers in the Eucharistic Presence of His Divine Majesty mysteries in which his own life and existence are inextricably bound up, and finally realises, as never before, the need he has of a life of communion and prayer, in order "to help his own infirmity," and to become united with Him, who, after all, is his first beginning and his last end.

But if prayer, like Rachel, is to become as a man's chaste spouse, she must be won by sacrifices of time, and of human pleasures and occupations. "And Jacob being in love with her, said: I will serve thee seven years for Rachel. So Jacob served seven years for Rachel; and they seemed but a few days, because of the greatness of his love" (Gen. xxix. 18–20).

Prayer is not always easy, because Divine love

does not always distil honey. There is the bitter and the sweet; seasons of heat and seasons of cold. Sometimes He is present, sometimes absent. *O adesse et abesse! primum ad majus solatium, secundum ad majus meritum. In praesentia anima delectatur in Deo; in absentia delectatur Deus in anima.*—(St. Bernard.)

The soul that loves and prays is described by the Holy Ghost as *lilium inter spinas;* and St. Bernard adds, *Plenus est totus mundus spinis* —the thorns are temptations, passions, dangers, weariness, sufferings, and sickness. But the truth remains firm. *Qui diliget Me manifestobo ei meipsum* (John xiv. 21). *Scire Jesum Christum* is the experimental fruit of prayer.

Though St. Paul repeatedly warns the clergy to look first to themselves: to sanctify their own souls by prayer, reading, meditation—*Attendite vobis, et universo gregi* (Acts xx. 28); *Attendi tibi et doctrinae*—and thus comments powerfully on the decree passed in the beginning by the Apostolic College, with Peter at their head, "We will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the work of the ministry"; still it is certain that Apostolic men engaged in the ministry would do wrong to spend the whole of their time upon

their knees, or in church; like Cistercians, Carthusians, and others who take little part in the ministry, but instead devote themselves almost exclusively to the Apostolic work of prayer. But it is certain from the example and precepts of Our Lord, from the practice and teaching of the Apostles, and the Saints in every age, and of all truly Apostolic men, that prayer is an essential and primary work of the Apostolate. Any one will understand that this must be so, if he knows what Apostolic men aim at and intend.

It is nothing less than this:—

1. To become supernatural men themselves, to become possessors of powers that are above nature, to become so closely and intimately united with God Himself that they may truly say, "It is no longer I that work and live, but Christ who worketh and liveth in me."

This new birth, this transformation and elevation of the soul, is accomplished only by a double action, divine and human—viz., by God's grace and our co-operation. Hence the necessity to Apostolic men of a life of prayer.

2. To become "the light of the world," "the salt of the earth," the saviours of men. This is an undertaking that far exceeds the powers of

nature. But the strength and the grace have been promised to men of prayer. The more difficult the work, the more prayer is needed. Apostolic work, being the most difficult and the most supernatural work that exists, is more dependent on prayer than any other work. Hence the Holy Ghost has said, in many places, First *prayer*, then *preaching*.

This is the universal sentiment of the Fathers and Doctors of the Church. St. Basil declares that the fruit of preaching depends upon prayer. And St. Bernard, summing up the life of Apostolic men, says that it is made up of preaching, good example, and prayer; and he concludes thus: "*Nunc manent tria haec, verbum, exemplum, et Oratio; major autem horum Oratio.*"

The Church has prescribed only the Liturgy to Priests, under pain of sin. But her whole spirit, *magisterium*, and life encourage the formation of the habit of constant prayer. She leaves to her children the greatest freedom to grow in the life of prayer, according to their grace.

The daily meditation, as it is called, is but one means to this end. If a Priest could become a man of prayer without daily meditation, this exercise would no longer be necessary to him.

But the name meditation is not an exact name for this exercise, which may consist of contemplation as well as of meditation, either separate or mixed. The French call the exercise *l'oraison*—or prayer.

That a Priest should give half-an-hour a day to the exercise of meditation is a recognised rule among the clergy of England. It may be said to be part of the common discipline of the Church, inasmuch as it is practised in every seminary, and urged upon the clergy in every retreat.

But three questions arise on this subject, upon which different opinions may be held:—

(1) As to the best time of day for meditation;

(2) As to the system to be followed;

(3) As to the matter.

I. There can be no doubt that the morning is the time which has obtained the preference for meditation. The reasons for this are so obvious and so numerous that we need not mention them. But there are two classes of persons to consider.

First, those who are so wearied, tired, and dried up in the morning that they get even through their Mass, and its preparation and thanksgiving, only with great effort. Their meditation becomes to them an habitual burden at that time; and

they derive little other fruit from it but that of patience and resignation.

Secondly, there are others who, without being able to assign physical infirmity as an excuse for making no morning meditation, are so habitually hindered, preoccupied, and excited by one thing or another in the morning that they cannot get into that calm and peaceful state which is so necessary for recollection. Their day is a whirlwind, and they feel its rising as soon as they are on the move. The result in both cases is that too often nature or resolution break down, and that when the man is left to himself, and has no longer the support of community life, he ends by giving up the habit of meditation.

Is there no alternative? Is there something so sacred about the first hours of the morning that the meditation must be made then or never?

St. Peter of Alcantara, whose Treatise on Prayer and Meditation was used and habitually recommended by St. Teresa, lays it down that the best times for prayer are the night and the early morning. And he says that this teaching is according to Holy Scripture.

When the excitement and life of the day have died down, and calm and quiet return as prepara-

tion for repose and sleep, the powers of the soul more easily gather themselves together for prayer and converse with the Unseen. This may not be the experience of all, but it is of many. An obvious objection is that in this country missionary Priests are full of work for souls in the evening. For a couple of hours at least they are most nights either in church, or visiting schools and clubs, or engaged in the instruction of converts. Still, if there be really the desire to find, say, half-an-hour for quiet prayer, there will be few indeed who will be unable to secure that amount of time, either immediately before or after the night work of the Apostolic ministry.

In the Conference on "His Divine Majesty in the Eucharist" we have spoken of prayer before the Tabernacle at night, and here we need only refer to what has been already said, adding that such prayer fully meets the soul's requirements, and may be made to take the place of what is called the daily meditation, if it be done seriously, with care and time.

St. Peter of Alcantara advises that as long a space of time as we can should be given to this prayer, and that one long space of time is better than two short spaces; and for this reason, that it

takes a good time to calm down the imagination and the mind and feelings, and that we may have to get up from our prayer just as we were about to enter upon it well. And coming down to particulars, he thinks that less than one hour and a half is really short; because, as he says, one sometimes spends half-an-hour in merely tuning the instrument. But, he adds, when the prayer is entered upon after some other spiritual exercise, such as Office or Mass, less time is needed.

And then he concludes his advice on this point by saying:—

"But let him not hesitate, who has but little time at his disposal on account of his many occupations, to offer to God his smaller coin of time, like the poor widow in the Temple; because, if the smaller gift be not the result of mere negligence, He who feeds all His creatures according to their nature and their need, will provide for him also according to his necessity."[1]

II. As to the system or method, much has been written by spiritual writers. The three chief systems of meditation have been analysed and commented on by Father Faber in his popular work, "All for Jesus."

[1] St. Peter of Alcantara's Treatise on Prayer, Advice VI.

You have probably during the years of seminary life learnt some system of meditation. If this suits you, nothing more is to be said. Keep to what suits you.

But if it should happen that the experience of years has left you dissatisfied and discouraged, there is no reason why you should not simplify matters to the utmost. Thus, without any preludes, rules, or conclusions, take some vocal prayer—the Our Father, the Litany of Jesus, the *Miserere* or any other psalm, the *Stabat Mater* or any other prayer or hymn. Say it *slowly*, think about it, make such acts of admiration, praise, thanksgiving, petition, self-humiliation, as may be easily prompted by a little goodwill on your part. Think of anything you are anxious about, to commend it to God. Persevere in this, whether you are consoled by experiencing feelings of devotion or whether you remain dry and cold. Is there any one who cannot do this?

But if this does not sufficiently feed and satisfy the soul, we may follow another very simple way.

1. Make devoutly the sign of the Cross, thinking of the words while you say them.

Besides gaining the indulgence of fifty days, by

this act you place yourself in the Divine presence of the Adorable Trinity and of Jesus crucified.

2. Use two or three verses of the *Miserere*, or any other formula that may help you to humble yourself before God—*e.g.*, "I will speak to the Lord, though I am but dust and ashes"—or make an act of contrition.

You are then ready to begin to read the matter on which you propose to feed your soul.

When the time prescribed is over, end—

3. By an act of thanksgiving; and for this use a few words of the *Gloria in excelsis: "Laudamus Te, benedicimus Te,"* &c., &c. Or of the *Te Deum: "Per singulos dies benedicimus Te, et laudamus nomen Tuum in sæculum, et in sæculum sæculi,"* &c., &c., or any other form of thanksgiving. But never omit the manners of a gentleman, and thank His Majesty for whatever He has given you.

III. Now for a few words about the *subject-matter* of your prayer.

There is an immense variety of books or journals of meditation, in which the matter is carefully selected and divided into points. There is therefore a great choice.

But it may be observed that if these courses

of meditation have their uses and advantages, they have also their drawback.

It has been observed by profound thinkers and by theologians that the *compendia* and short *cursus* of theology that have come into use during the last two hundred and fifty years do not make deep theologians. The great fountains of theological knowledge are neglected, and, instead, men are satisfied with the little cupfuls that are served to them.

The short courses of meditation, with their three little points of thought and affection, prepared by skilful and devout persons, do no doubt serve a most excellent purpose, and they fully satisfy many, perhaps the majority of people.

But there are many minds that, more or less insensibly, fret under this minute care. They would do better were they able, as it were, to forage for themselves. It is sometimes a sense of the artificiality of the method, a sense of sitting down to food that has been not only prepared, but half digested, by another, that seems to interfere with the inclinations of nature to gather and provide for oneself.

There is, moreover, the feeling that one is being hurried on from subject to subject, and that the

course of meditations is prepared for days and weeks, rather than for the state of health or the constitution and appetite of the person to whom it has been given.

The alternative is to select a work or treatise on a particular subject; to read it day by day, a little at a time, pondering over what is read, applying it to oneself as far as possible, and spending a good time—and the more the better—in affection and devout mental progress.

Take for instance a treatise on the virtue of "Humility," such as De Bergamo's—it contains matter to last a year at least; or Palma, Emmerick, Coleridge, Gallwey on the "Passion"; or St. Alphonsus, and St. Francis of Sales on the "Love of God"; or Blessed Grignon de Montfort's "Treatise on True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin," a book which some persons read and prey upon every year; or Humphrey's "Mary Magnifying God." Rodriguez' and other spiritual writings supply abundant material. There are Saints' Lives — *e.g.*, St. Teresa's, St. Vincent of Paul's, St. John Baptist de Rossi's; and the Letters of Saints—for instance, St. Catherine's and F. Francis Xavier's. But besides these, certain works by the Fathers and others furnish excel-

lent material, and are as a mine of precious ore that repays working. These are not, strictly speaking, "meditation books"; but being works that interest the mind, that convey gospel truths in a striking manner, that suggest God and the supernatural, they are highly useful to certain souls which gather their spiritual food more successfully in this way than in any other. The whole object of prayer being to unite the mind and heart to God, if this end is better arrived at in one way than another, it is wise to adopt it.

Let it, however, be understood that we are by no means prescribing this method as one suitable for every one. Probably the great majority of people will do best to follow the system which has grown up in modern times, and its advantages for them will counterbalance the drawbacks.

But there can be no doubt that immense and lasting benefit is derived to a soul that is seriously in earnest, by impregnating, saturating it through and through with the truth and the lessons of some great doctrine or virtue. And this result can be brought about by taking up a book or a treatise, and holding to it in prayer for months and months together—that is, for the length of

time needed to obtain a complete mastery of it by the affections as much as by the mind.

Addressing as we do those who are on the threshold of their Apostolic career, we insist only on a high appreciation of prayer as an essential part of their profession. Entertain for this exercise the highest possible esteem; desire ardently to become a man of prayer, like a true Apostle; and if you have not this desire, *saltem desidera id multum desiderare.* God will then lead you on, little by little. He will teach you by books this science of the Saints, but He will teach you much more by the experimental knowledge which He will give you in prayer.

The world, and all worldly men and women, are unable to see and understand how it is that prayer should possess the extraordinary importance that the Saints attach to it. They will not remember that the Apostles were guided by God for their own and our instruction when they publicly announced that their business was CONTINUAL PRAYER and PREACHING. *Nos autem orationi et ministerio verbi* INSTANTES *erimus.*

They decry men and women who give their whole lives to the Apostolic work of Carthusians, Carmelite nuns, Poor Clares; and other contem-

platives are spoken of as eccentric persons, who have unfortunately thrown away valuable lives which might have been spent in works of charity, and have given themselves up instead to the Apostolic work of continual prayer for the conversion of souls and the salvation of the world.

Become men of prayer, in spite of every obstacle, and God will use you as an Apostle in His service.

CONFERENCE XIII.

I. HUMILITY THE FOUNDATION OF THE APOSTOLIC LIFE.

DE TORRENTE IN VIA BIBET, PROPTEREA EXALTABIT CAPUT.

—*Ex communi Apostolorum.*

As of all sanctity, so of the Apostolic life, humility is the foundation. The measure of the depth of this virtue will be the measure of the height of holiness. The greatest Saints have been the humblest.

It is not surprising, therefore, to find that in the Office of Apostles there are so many direct and indirect references to this virtue.

Partially in the First Vespers, but with a much fuller and more emphatic declaration in the Second Vespers, the Holy Ghost calls attention to the part played by this virtue in the life of Jesus Christ, the great High Priest and model of Apostolic men.

1. The first antiphon of the Second Vespers strikes the keynote thus: *Tu es sacerdos in*

aeternum. The majestic psalm, *Dixit Dominus*, repeated from the First Vespers, though superficially obscure, begins with a grand and triumphant theme, which is plain enough.

We may paraphrase the verses thus: In the 1st and 2nd verses the Father declares that His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, is of the same nature and in the same glory as Himself, and that the propagation of His Kingdom, the Church, shall continue until all men, either willingly or by compulsion, shall have become perfectly subject to Him—*i.e.*, until, at the name of Jesus, every knee shall bow, whether in heaven, on earth, or in hell, and every tongue confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father.

In the 3rd verse, the Lord shall send forth His Church of Apostolic men, to be His witnesses from Sion, to the uttermost part of the earth. *Dominare:* "Rule Thou, Lord Jesus, in the midst of Thy enemies," by preaching, planting churches, schools, and institutions everywhere, in the midst of the most hostile and non-Catholic population, until the end of time.

Then in the 4th verse, when the work of evangelisation has been accomplished, the Lord Jesus shall come in great power and majesty,

attended by His Apostles and Saints, *in splendoribus sanctorum*, and His authority, which had been gainsaid and derided, shall be made supreme and manifest to all, and all shall confess Him to be consubstantial with God, born of the Father from all eternity.

The next verse begins with a strange and emphatic declaration: *Juravit Dominus et non poenitebit eum.* Why this emphasis? Because the Priesthood of Christ may seem to men to disappoint their expectations; because the Priests of Christ are often far below their proper standard, and unworthy of their calling; because His Priesthood is so frequently persecuted and cast out by the men of this world. All this notwithstanding, the Lord swears that Jesus Christ, His Son, is the eternal Priest and intermediary between God and man. God is not ashamed of the Divine Priest—*non poenitebit eum.*

In the next three verses we are assured that, although kings and rulers conspire against Him, and nations reject Him and His Priests, and a multitude of men lift up their heads in proud contempt of His Priesthood, He—being God and seated on the throne of His Father—will, in His own time, *in die irae suae*, destroy those kings,

judge and bring to nought those nations, and crush those numerous heads that have been raised to utter blasphemies against Him and to defy the powers of His Priesthood.

And now we come to the summing up of this brief but magnificent declaration, to the lesson taught by the short but pregnant last verse of this psalm: *De torrente in via bibet, propterea exaltabit caput.* There is a consensus among patristic interpreters that these words refer to the Sacred Humanity; and that the torrent of which He drank during his life upon earth, while *in via,* was the rapid troubled course of human events, which were, for the most part, results brought about by the ignorance and wickedness of the Jews. He had longed for His Passion, and was straitened until it was accomplished. *Humiliavit semetipsum, factus obediens, usque ad mortem, mortem autem crucis.* He drank the bitter waters of humiliation, sorrow, and suffering to the dregs, during the whole course of His life, but especially in His Passion and Death. *Intraverunt aquae usque ad animam meam.* And the psalm adds, "Therefore shall He lift up the head"—*propterea exaltabit caput.* And this St. Paul repeats in fuller words: "For which cause God also hath

exalted Him, and hath given Him a name which is above all names; that in the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, &c.; and that every tongue should confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father" (Phil. ii.).

The Ascension of Our Lord, His glory and majesty seated at the right hand on the throne of His Father, His power to preach the doctrines of salvation and to convert souls, to judge all, and to reign over all, were due to the hypostatic union; but they have also been declared to be a reward earned by the most splendid and conspicuous example of humility ever set before the eyes of men or angels. *Humiliavit, exinanivit semet-ipsum, factus obediens, usque ad mortem, mortem autem crucis.*

Humility is, therefore, regarded as a root out of which spring up all that is greatest, noblest, and most magnificent. They whose office and vocation is highest ought to be proportionately humblest. They who share the dignity of the great High Priest are bound to ground themselves in the practice of humility, the special virtue of the great High Priest. "Learn of Me, that I am meek and humble of heart."

CONFERENCE XIV.

II. HUMILITY THE FOUNDATION OF THE APOSTOLIC LIFE—*continued.*

EGO AUTEM HUMILIATUS SUM NIMIS.
—*Ex communi Apostolorum.*

IN reciting the great Vespers of the Feast of Apostles, we should feel that the first antiphon and psalm, which have been already analysed, set before us a magnificent picture of Our Lord Jesus Christ, reigning consubstantial and coequal with His Father in power and majesty, and of the way of humility by which the Sacred Humanity ascended to Divine sovereignty.

The subsequent antiphons and their corresponding psalms present pictures of certain stages or phases of the spiritual life, through which we must pass in order to reach the sanctity befitting our Priesthood.

The second antiphon assumes man's elevation to the Priesthood, and announces that the Lord desires to place him among the princes of His

people. *Collocet eum Dominus cum principibus populi sui.* This unexpected and unmerited honour awakens at once an impulse of gratitude, and the choir breaks forth into a joyful psalm of praise: *Laudate, pueri, Dominum,* &c.; *Sit nomen Domini benedictum,* &c.; *A solis ortu usque ad occasum laudabile nomen Domini,* &c.; *Excelsus super omnes gentes Dominus,* &c. And then, in the fifth verse, the question is boldly asked, "Who is like unto the Lord our God in His majestic life above, and in the lowliness of His regard for the humble?"—*Quis sicut Dominus, Deus noster, qui in altis habitat, et humilia respicit in coelo et in terra?* And illustrating, as it were, the habit and character of this Lord and God, He is described as, habitually, *suscitans a terra inopem et de stercore erigens pauperem,* in order to fashion such unlikely material into Priests for ever, seated with princes, and not with any sort of princes, but *cum principibus populi sui.*

And that this wonderful thing may be the more readily believed, appeal is made to miraculous interventions of love and mercy on the part of God, of which men have had ocular experience; such as His direct interference with the physical laws of nature, in the case of the unhappy woman

who had been found to be physically incapable of childbearing, and had on that account been cast out of her house in disgrace by her husband. The Divine power not only restored her to her proper place of honour in the home, but enabled her, in spite of the conclusions of science, to become the joyful mother of a large progeny of children.

Let us now apply the psalmist's description of God's dealing with Priests to ourselves. Whom does he choose for Priests? The humble—*humilia respicit in coelo et in terra.* Everywhere, in heaven above and on the earth below, He inclines to the humble. He calls his Priests out of two categories—*a terra* and *de stercore.* That is, he chooses men who are of the earth earthy, *a terra,* but who still have not lost their baptismal innocence. He also calls and lifts up men who have fallen once, or again and again, into mortal sin, *de stercore erigens pauperem.*

To become humble we must be honest and true with ourselves, and not hesitate to take our place as penitents in the second category, if we truly belong to it.

To have had the misfortune to offend God mortally once, or for a time to have lived in total forgetfulness of His holy law, may now, by God's

grace, be turned into a most powerful motive and lever for good.

To realise that I have deliberately spit into the face of God, that I have been a crucifier of my Lord and Redeemer, that I have esteemed the Precious Blood unclean and trampled it under foot, and that, perhaps, I have lived in this disposition of soul for a long period of time—the calm contemplation of all this is truly calculated to humiliate and to humble me. Who am I? we may say. A brand snatched from the burning torments of hell; one justly convicted of murder and deicide, though reprieved, pardoned by an act of grace. Had I been condemned for a shameful and unpardonable crime before a civil tribunal, and, after the verdict had been given and the sentence passed, let off at last by an act of sovereign clemency, how should I dread to appear again among my fellow-men! In my shame I should ever imagine that every finger was pointed at me as the refuse of the gallows, and deserving of the basest criminal's death. Such consciousness in human life would suffice to break a man's spirit; the overwhelming dishonour would be worse than death. But what a difference there is between God's dealing with us and the conduct of men!

If any one is tempted to despair by the thought of his sins, and of the days wherein he lived at a distance from God, it is the Lord Himself who comforts and reassures him: *Misericors et miserator Dominus.* It is He who puts into his mouth these words: *Thou shalt sprinkle me with hyssop,* dipped in the precious Blood, *and I shall be cleansed; Thou shalt wash me* in Thy Blood, *and I shall be made whiter than snow.*

With the penitent Apostle Paul he will say: *Unhappy man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death? The grace of God by Jesus Christ* (Rom. vii. 24). And the same Apostle, after giving a list of most heinous sinners, says: *Such some of you were; but you are washed, but you are sanctified, but you are justified in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our Lord* (1 Cor. vi.). By the Blood we are cleansed, by the Blood we are saved. *Behold the Lamb of God, behold Him who taketh away the sins of the world* (John i. 29). And having repented and been absolved, we must say with David, *As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our iniquities from us.*

Nevertheless, be not without sorrow for forgiven sin; but cry out incessantly with holy David:

Tibi soli peccavi; amplius lava me ab iniquitate mea et a peccato meo munda me.

But if you contemplate yourself "on the dunghill," or as "of the dunghill," *de stercore*, keep before your mind the picture as the Holy Ghost has drawn it. That is to say, see also coming out of heaven just above you, and about to embrace you, the loving and compassionate arms of God, who is described as *suscitans inopem* and *erigens pauperem*, in the present tense, to signify the continuous action of God's mercy. This vision of the extension towards him of the Divine arms ought to fill even the most heinous sinner with a joyful confidence. *Quis ut Deus? Quis sicut Dominus, Deus noster?* &c.

God desires us to become humble by a true knowledge of ourselves, by a frank confession that we are sinners, as well as by a knowledge of Himself. Mother Church keeps this truth continually before our mind. Every day of our lives she makes us repeat these and similar words in the Divine Office: *Priusquam humiliare ego deliqui. Bonum mihi quia humiliasti me. In virtute tua humiliasti me. Humiliatus sum usquequaque Domine; vivifica me secundum verbum tuum. Vide humilitatem meam et eripe*

me. Would the Prophet David, the Apostle Peter, Mary Magdalen, Augustine, Mary of Egypt, Margaret of Cortona, and other penitents have attained the height of sanctity which they have reached had they not been nerved, stimulated, and spurred on to most generous acts of love of God, by the thoughts and motives that sprang from the groundwork of their humility?

It is part of God's royal generosity to make it possible for penitents to ascend to heights which, at first sight, might seem to be reserved for the innocent.

Those who have been great sinners and have thoroughly repented will be found eventually far and away above the souls of the innocent in heaven, if upon earth they have been deeper in humility and more generous in love than those who have never sinned grievously.

So essential is a deep foundation of real humility for sanctity, that God, not unfrequently, allows a soul to fall even into mortal sin, in order to awake her when He perceives that she is slumbering in a state of self-satisfaction, without any thought whatever of her need of the virtue of humility.

There are also allowed by God in His goodness certain temptations and trials, whose very nature

is to trouble and cloud the judgment, so that the mind remains in doubt and uncertainty as to whether there has been complete, partial, or no consent. And thus a man learns humility from what he suffers, even without sin.

But those who are of the category *a terra* have no less need of humility than those who are sanctified and saved as penitents. And, in reality, they will find plenty in their nature and disposition to humble them to the dust.

And, first, let any one consider how many years of our life have been unsanctified and spent simply in the natural order—in eating, drinking, sleeping, resting, and recreating, actions and times for which there will be no supernatural reward whatever—not because they could not bear fruit in eternity, but because we failed to touch and raise them into supernatural acts, which we might most easily have done, by a simple intention to imitate, to please, to serve our Lord, or to unite with Him in the performance of the human acts which are essential or useful to our natural life.

Instead of heaping up merits, and turning everything into heavenly gold, we have lived like a pagan, a pig, or a horse, during a large part of our existence.

Second, How blind we are! Our eyes are choked and clogged up with the dust or mire of earth. There are persons steeped in worldliness, who never pray or worship God, but who will tell you that they never do anything wrong, but will at once recite for you proofs of their goodness, by mentioning acts of philanthropy and of natural virtue. They are unconsciously blind to their state, and are living in mortal sin.

But there are people, and Priests, living, not in mortal sin, but in absolute blindness as to their condition. Others see them as peacocks of vanity, of little head, harsh and grating voice, and flesh of inferior value, or as frogs or toads for inflated ambition; touchy, sensitive, or else self-concentrated and armed like a porcupine. But they see nothing of this themselves.

We have within seven fountain-heads of evil tendency, and they are continually exuding some kind of acrid or poisonous slime. God made this clearly known to a Priest[1] who was seeking to know the truth. He showed him two faces, one of which he recognised as his own, and another. From the face, head, neck, and hands of the one were slowly exuding, as from every pore, long disgusting

[1] The "priest" here referred to was the Cardinal himself.—*Ed.*

streams of discoloured matter, of the thickness of vermicelli; and when they were removed they began to exude again, and the whole body seemed to be in this condition. The other face was covered with sores and scabs that showed signs of healing, though some pores were still open and slightly flowing. This vision represented the state of the two souls, as affected by the fountains of pride within them; and it threw up into a clear and vivid light that to which the mind had been blind.

As the body of a poor and neglected creature may be infested with vermin without his noticing that which his neighbours are only too well aware of, so may it be with our soul. Pustules and running sores may eat into and disfigure the flesh, and there are senses that will be quick to discover the disease. But the disease of pride, vanity, selfishness, want of charity, will gnaw and prey upon the soul, while the soul remains unaware.

Then there are spiritual diseases of neglect, or omission; the roots of certain virtues that ought to be cultivated and spring into vigorous life are neglected, till they dry up and die. And the soul will live on and languish in this state for years, unless the Holy Ghost sends forth a ray of His light—*lucis tuae radium.*

St. Teresa tells us that she was herself "for seventeen years blind" to the maladies her soul was suffering from; and she beheld the place in hell to which they might eventually have led her.

We read in the Life of St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi that "God continually instructed her, by giving her the knowledge of her own vileness and of His greatness and goodness"; and again, that "He placed a lamp in her soul, which is the knowledge of her own nothingness and baseness."

St. Paul said of himself, *Nihil mihi conscius sum, sed nos in hoc justificatus sum.* He was not conscious of his sin, but he was by no means certain that he was free from hidden faults. And if the Apostle could say this, how much more we!

When you come to feel that your soul is a filthy ditch that requires continual emptying; that it is a chamber of horrors you would not for the world show any one into; that it is so deeply diseased, so covered with wounds, blisters, and running sores, that no one but the Divine Physician can cure it, by pouring over it, and into it, His own most precious blood—then you may hope that you are laying the foundations of humility.

In celebrating Holy Mass the Priest offers the sacrifice *pro innumerabilibus peccatis et offensionibus et negligentiis meis.* Are we aware of them? Do we fully recognise them?

What we stand most in need of is light—*lucis tuae radium.*

You are young Priests, filled with good desires, but not advanced far on the road of perfection. You may look on yourself with some complacency to-day, but when you have more light you will look on yourself with a holy hatred and disgust. If you earnestly pray for the light, the Holy Ghost will send one ray that will be a revelation. And if you are faithful, He will send another, one at a time, discovering to you as you can bear it and can amend, a bad habit, a passion, a neglect, a sin—one after another. *Domine Jesu; noverim me, noverim Te.*

Finally, it was after the Apostolic man had understood God's action in its full reference, lifting him up from the earth and from the dunghill, with all his defects and miseries, that he intones the next psalm, *Credidi.*

On account of what I have heard of God's goodness, and seen of my own sins and miseries, I believe, and I open my mouth and truly declare,

Ego autem humiliatus sum nimis. And therefore he goes on in the fulness of his heart, in the intensity of his conviction, to declare that all men who admire, value, or praise me are mistaken. They are themselves deceived and deceivers. *Ego dixi in excessu meo, Omnis homo mendax.*

ST. ALBERT'S COLL

CONFERENCE XV.

III. HUMILITY—ITS CONSEQUENCE.

DIRUPISTI DOMINI VINCULA MEA.
—*Ex communi Apostolorum.*

HUMILITY being a virtue very dear to God and to Our Lord Jesus Christ, has in it something unspeakably sweet. It is the sweetness of a hidden and intimate truth discovered, the sweetness of a Divine revelation, the sweetness of a Divine presence; for no sooner is the soul humble than God Himself enters into it as the abode of His choice. Though it be accompanied by tears and the most heartfelt sorrow, it is yet sweet as nothing else.

It is not surprising, therefore, to find that the next stage that we are brought to in the Office of Apostles is one of gratitude. I have believed in Thy word, I have been exceedingly humbled, I see myself now as no man can see or know me. How shall I repay Him? *Quid retribuam Domino pro omnibus quae retribuit mihi?* I

am a Priest for ever, I am a Christ; there can be no doubt as to how I shall repay the Lord my God. *Calicem salutaris accipiam et nomen Domini invocabo.*

I will take the chalice of the most precious blood, of the blood by which we are washed and sanctified. I will plunge my soul into that blood, and offer it up in that chalice to God my Father. I will do this for the four great ends of sacrifice.

Next, *Vota mea Domino reddam,* &c. I will keep my vows to God, my good resolutions and promises. I will keep them before all men, and I will do so until death, for I know that precious in the sight of God is the death of those who become Saints by fidelity to their engagements to God.

O Domine, ego servus tuus et filius ancillae tuae —I am Thy servant, or, more correctly, Thy slave, and the son of Thy handmaid: by Thy handmaid St. Augustine understands the Church; but we may apply it also to the Blessed Virgin, for words applied to one mother are constantly applied to the other.

Dirupisti vincula mea. I was a slave bound by the devil, bound by the cords of my evil

passions and inclinations, held to the earth by hundreds and thousands of threads, many of which I have weaved, like the spider, out of myself. All these affections to the things and the people of earth, to my pleasures and conveniences, are so many cords or threads that entangle and bind me to earth. Self-love is for ever spinning fine and almost invisible silken threads that hold and bind me down. While thus held captive the soul can never fly away like the dove and be at rest in the clefts of the rock, in the wounds of my Saviour. If the bird be held captive, it matters little whether it be bound by one or by many threads, by a rope or by a chain.

It is only through humility and by God's grace that we can destroy all these bonds and attachments to the world, the flesh, and the devil. And therefore we say, *Dirupisti Domine vincula mea.* And as after the gift of humility and humiliation we said, *Calicem salutarem accipiam,* so now, when the further work is being accomplished, we add in gratitude, *Tibi sacrificabo hostiam laudis.* This sacrifice of praise is the Holy Mass. Three times we are taught by the Church to repeat this verse—at the beginning, in the middle, and at the

end of this psalm—*Dirupisti Domine vincula mea, Tibi sacrificabo hostiam laudis.*

The breaking of our bonds is the work of a whole life, for we are constantly forging new chains and spinning new threads. St. Francis of Sales says that we may be happy if the last thread of self-love is snapped only in the moment of death.

After these fundamental lessons taught in the solemn Vespers of Apostles, we go on to other Apostolic works which naturally follow, such as sowing and watering the seed, and other matters that we shall speak of in their proper place.

Meanwhile, the following suggestions may be adopted, according to the grace given you, as practices in humility.

Keep the subject of humility constantly before your mind. St. Charles Borromeo did so by taking the word *humilitas*—crowned—as his heraldic device. A great and holy Belgian cardinal in our own days emblazoned upon his shield the words, *De stercore erigens pauperem*, making his name a plea for his motto; so that the thought and desire of humility might be ever before his mind.

1. Carefully study and pray over some full treatise on the virtue of humility. You will

never really labour to become humble until you are intellectually and conscientiously convinced of the value of this virtue. Take, for instance, Bergamo's excellent book on "Humility of Heart," the fullest and the best that we know. It would serve as a meditation book for a whole year, and would then bear often re-reading. Or Rodriguez's classical treatise on Humility, in his work on "Christian Perfection."

2. Become familiar with every verse of the *Miserere*. The Church in her liturgy is constantly using it, and during Holy Week she repeats it many times a day. St. Teresa often said the *Miserere* sixteen times in a day. Each verse is full of meaning. We can touch only on a few points.

David referred to his own great crime when he said, *Quoniam iniquitatem meam ego cognosco et peccatum meum contra me est semper.* But suppose we have been preserved from any such heinous wickedness, the Holy Ghost desires that we should use these words, and use them truly, all the same. And in this way take all the sins of thought, word, deed, and omission, those that you have known and those you have never adverted to: build them up, as it were, into a great

monument of sin; let them thus stand before you, higher than the Tower of Babel, made up as though of innumerable venial sins and imperfections. The sins of a whole life may thus appear before our eyes as a tower, a mountain of offences and iniquity. And we apply to them the words of the psalms. It is thus that the Saints have been able to use them truly and usefully.

The words *ut justificeris in sermonibus tuis et vincas cum judicaris* are obscure. According to Bellarmine, they may be understood thus: To Thee only have I sinned, and have done evil before Thee; and I make this open confession of sin committed in Thy sight, though secret and hidden from men, in order that by pleading guilty Thou mayest be justified in having condemned me, and mayest come out triumphant should any one challenge the justice of this sentence.

Ecce enim veritatem dilexisti. Behold, Thou hast always loved simplicity of heart, straightforwardness, and truthfulness, and it was because I was simple and truthful that Thou hast so often made known to me those elements or facts of Divine wisdom which were naturally uncertain

and hidden to me, both as to the time they should occur and as to their very nature. And among these facts or mercies of Divine wisdom is this—that Thou shalt sprinkle me with hyssop dipped in Thy blood and I shall be cleansed, Thou shalt wash me in this precious blood and I shall be made whiter than snow.

All the rest of the psalm is full of joy and gladness, of petition for the gifts of the Holy Ghost, of good resolutions to serve God, winding up with the most consoling of truths, *Sacrificium Deo Spiritus contribulatus; cor contritum et humiliatum Deus non despicies.*

3. Another exercise in humility of heart is this: When God named persons or things in the Old or the New Testament, with wisdom He gave them names appropriate to their character. Let us give ourselves the names that suit us, and summon ourselves before God by these names, saying thus: I have twelve names—namely, PRIDE, COVETOUSNESS, LUST, ANGER, GLUTTONY, ENVY, SLOTH, WEAKNESS, IGNORANCE, POVERTY, THEFT, and CRUELTY. The first seven are the roots of sin within me, or the seven great heads and sources from which all other sins flow. They are buried in my nature; some of them ooze up and stain

me with their noxious slime, others are ready to break out if encouraged by my perverse will.

It is needless to explain the meaning of each of the seven capital sins: PRIDE, signifying my self-esteem; my valuing myself above others. COVETOUSNESS, my coveting the honour, which belongs to God alone, for anything good that I may do; my coveting the praise and esteem of men, the possession of influence, power, wealth, which God does not wish me to have. As to WEAKNESS, of mind, of will, of resolution, of body and soul, the case is too manifest. And so as to IGNORANCE—ignorance that is portentous, almost universal, and embracing many things that every one would suppose I know: ignorance, therefore, which I should be ashamed that people should see in me. POVERTY; poverty to which I have reduced myself—poverty in virtue, in strength, in resources. THEFT, because I am continually defrauding God of His glory, and taking that glory to myself both by acts of self-complacency and vanity, and by endeavouring to induce others to give to me the glory which really belongs to God in any good thing I may have been enabled to do. I therefore deserve the name of THEFT. And CRUELTY: who has acted more cruelly towards my Saviour than I? I have cut

Him with rods, crowned Him with thorns, spit upon His face, struck Him vile blows, crucified Him again and again, and trampled under foot the blood of God. Could cruelty go further? These twelve, then, are my true Christian and proper names. And I will often repeat them slowly when I kneel down to meditate or pray; when I am being praised or honoured, perhaps on account of my office, by men; when I am tempted to vainglory; whenever I desire to draw God's mercy down upon me. *Cor contritum et humiliatum, Deus, non despicies.*

4. We may sometimes take St. Bernard's three points for meditation:—

(1) The vileness of my origin.

(2) The miseries and humiliations of my present existence—physical and also moral.

(3) The wretched and disgusting end to which my body will soon come—stench, filth, and food for worms.

5. Lastly, we may often say over these pregnant words:—

My God, I am NOTHING;
I have NOTHING;
I can NOTHING.

We once asked our great predecessor, Cardinal

Wiseman, what was his favourite ejaculation during the day. He took up a scrap of paper and wrote:—

Deus meus, Deus meus, NIHIL *sum, sed* TUUS *sum.*

All is summed up in these two sentences:—

Sine Me nihil postestis facere.

Omnia possum in Eo qui me confortat.

And we may end with the hymn wherein the Church implores the Blessed Virgin to come to our help in breaking our chains and obtaining for us the Divine light, and everything else we need:—

Solve vincla reis,
Profer lumen coecis,
Mala nostra pelle,
Bona cuncta posce.

Adulter non fuisti, hoc tibi dicit Dominus Deus tuus: regebam te mihi; servabam te mihi ut adulterium non committeres; suasor defuit et ut suasor deesset ego feci; locus et tempus defuit, et ut haec deessent, ego fui.

CONFERENCE XVI.

THE VALUE OF THE SOUL.

HOC EST PRAECEPTUM MEUM, UT DILIGATIS INVICEM, SICUT DILEXI VOS.

—*Ex communi Apostolorum.*

THIS is the first antiphon of Vespers and of Lauds in the Office of Apostles; and it is the keynote of the Apostolic life. We are to love souls as Christ has loved us.

And the second antiphon explains and develops the first: *Majorem caritatem nemo habet, ut animam suam ponat quis pro amicis suis.* We are, therefore, to love souls by suffering for them, after His example.

And the third antiphon announces the reward that this service of our neighbour shall secure for us: *Vos amici mei estis, si feceritis quae praecipio vobis dicit Dominus.*

Every shepherd of souls ought to become deeply convinced of the value of a soul, for two reasons.

First, because he may be assailed by the temp-

tation of *tædium*—a feeling of disgust and sloth in the discharge of his Apostolic duties. Souls certainly make a large demand upon our life and inclinations. More self-sacrifice is required in the faithful discharge of a multitude of lesser duties towards them than in occasional great and heroic efforts. The grind of work, the monotony in self-denial, the poverty of visible results, are apt to make some men negligent or reckless. Ill health, or a low state of vitality, often break down certain physical powers of resistance; and then comes the danger of letting everything slip in disgust. "Is it worth the while? Oh for a little peace and quiet! What is the use of such fatigue?"

It is when under such trials as this that it is important at once to realise the value of a soul. Weigh the value of souls against your love of ease and your feelings of natural disgust; the difference will be the weight of the motive to press you forward in the discharge of duty.

Secondly, without reference to temptations of discouragement, a man will give himself more generously and more gladly to his work in proportion as he realises its extreme value. Nature does not persevere in a condition that pains and pinches, unless buoyed up by the prospects of

gaining a prize that is worth more than freedom from suffering. To suffer willingly, a man's love of the object for which he suffers ought to be stronger than his love for his own present comfort and convenience—stronger even than his love of health and of life.

It therefore behoves the Apostolic man to weigh well the claim of souls to be loved and served above all earthly things. Let us, then, examine some of the reasons that should make us desire to live and to die for the salvation of souls.

Section I.—The Beauty of the Soul.

First, the acme in God's creation of things visible was reached when He created man to His own image and likeness, breathing into him the breath of life — the immortal human soul. All that He had created during the previous five days had been for man's use and service. But man, established as lord in the midst of creation, was created for God Himself.

We cannot judge of the value and beauty of the soul from the appearance presented by the body. The body is simply a case, a shell, a receptacle, an instrument, for the soul. You can

no more judge of the value of a soul from what you see of its body than you can judge of a pearl by the roughness of its encasement, or of the sweetness of a nut by tasting the husk and shell that contain it.

The soul is an image of God, indivisible and absolutely simple, imperishable and immortal. With the weight of a Naysmith hammer you may crush the hardest stone, or you may dissolve it with a simple chemical; but not the weight, not the chemistry, of the universe can break into pieces or dissolve a soul. It is indivisible, imperishable. The eternal fires of hell itself are powerless to destroy it.

Its natural beauty and loveliness, as it came from the hand of God, correspond to its indestructible simplicity. The human body furnishes no more correct an idea of the soul's innate beauty than it does of its incorruptibility.

The natural beauty of a soul exceeds all natural beauty to be found in the universe. It is the Creator's masterpiece.

The heavenly bodies, on their orderly procession through space in light and splendour, captivate the imagination with awe and admiration. But their beauty and majesty are nothing compared

with the beauty, majesty, and power of a human soul.

There are mountain districts of rock and forest, crowned with eternal snow of immeasurable whiteness; there are landscapes of field and river, of hill and dale, rich with waving corn, flowing with milk and honey, veiled in the passing lights and shades of sun and cloud; there is the pathless ocean, kissing the sun on the horizon, with its refreshing breeze, its secret reserves of power, its myriad life, in its extent and vastness image of eternity; but nothing of these things in nature is in any way comparable to the beauty, value, and capacity of a single soul.

Jesus Christ once showed to St. Catherine of Siena a disembodied soul. She was ravished by the sight of its transcending beauty and splendour. He then said: "What thinkest thou of the soul? Had I not good reason to come down from heaven, to tread the earth, and to give My life to save from hell a work of such wondrous beauty?"

From that time forward Catherine became so transported with her love for souls that she used to kiss the footprints of priests, whenever she found them engaged on this Apostolic work, and

became herself ready to undertake everything and to suffer everything, were it a question of the salvation of a single soul.

Nor is it strange, when we come to think of it, that the human soul, as it comes from the hand of God, should exceed all other things in value and beauty. It was created to become the habitation of God. All other beautiful things in this world were created for man's use and benefit, but the soul for God alone. To estimate its worth, you must know the purpose for which it is made. You must know something of the nature and being of God to which it has been likened and fitted. But here below we see God only in a dark manner and through a veil, and it is so that we see the human soul.

What St. Catherine had beheld was a vision of a soul in its natural beauty. But behold it raised to the supernatural order, and endowed in baptism with Divine gifts. Here we enter into the mystery of the Life and Being of God. Human reason fails us in dealing with the Infinite. But Divine faith assures us that the soul becomes the home of the Deity, a sharer in His nature and perfections; and this not at a distance, or by way of allegory, but in an inti-

mate union of two beings. As fire inhabits the iron that it permeates, as the soul penetrates all the members of the body, so, even more intimately and more perfectly, do the Eternal Father, Son, and Holy Ghost enter into union with the soul raised to the supernatural order and furnished with sanctifying grace.

God has declared that His "delight is to be with the children of men," by reason of the gifts of grace that fit their souls to become worthy temples of His glory. The soul is not merely a temple, but a kingdom in its extent and the variety of its riches and resources.

See the poor human creature crawling in the dust of the earth, groaning and weeping in its misery in this vale of tears—there, within the wretched earthly tenement that is falling to pieces, dwells a soul of infinite price, the habitation of God, an associate of His glorious life.

The Divine estimate of the value of a soul is revealed to us by Jesus Christ, who, having had the joy set before Him, chose the Cross, so enamoured was He of the human soul, and so willing to pay even this price for its redemption. Three-and-thirty years of poverty and humiliation, sufferings—mental and physical—without num-

ber, the shame of His passion and death, and the shedding of His blood to the last drop, were accounted by Him as nothing in comparison with His love for souls.

He made no mystery of the value and dignity of the soul. He taught openly that a single soul is worth more than the whole world, that it is of priceless value, and that absolutely nothing exists for which it can be exchanged.

Speaking to St. Bridget, He said: "I, who created thee, have subjected every member of My body and all the powers of My soul to suffering and punishment for thy sake. I love thy soul to such a degree that, rather than lose it, I would again be crucified to save it, were such a thing needful." And on other occasions He spoke to the Saint in similar terms of His love for souls.

And especially He said, referring to the damned, that He would willingly have endured His passion and death over and over again, had it been possible, for the salvation of each one that was lost.

This is comprehensible if we consider that one of Our Lord's most acute sufferings in the agony in the Garden was the pain caused by the severance from Him of souls created to be members

of His mystical body. It was like the violent wrenching and tearing away of limbs from a living man.

Such the dignity and value of souls, and their intimate connection with the Son of God !

Then, again, the respect with which God treats the soul is another measure of its excellence. *Cum magna reverentia disponis nos* (Wisdom xii.). He invites and enlightens us, and offers strength to our weakness, but He compels no man against his will. He respects the freedom of the will.

He commissions the angels of heaven to become our constant guardians, "lest we dash our foot against a stone"; they accompany us all our life; while a multitude of other angels watch over states and peoples.

He has given us His own Mother to be our mother. And as He communicated Himself to her in the Incarnation, so is He ready to give Himself daily to us in Holy Communion. How all this declares the value of a soul in the eyes of God !

Section II.—How to overcome feelings of Repugnance and Disgust.

It is easy to get on with people who are clean, sweet, sympathetic, generous, grateful. Repugnances arise where people are the contrary of all this. Priests, dealing with others besides the lowest classes of the uneducated and the poor at home, and with the repulsive elements in foreign races abroad, may sometimes ask themselves, "How can I love such people? Their personal appearance, their animal expression, their habits, their ignorance, materialism and moral degradation, disgust me to the point that I can do nothing for them, and am tempted to abandon this field of work altogether."

This is but an illustration of the effect of sin, which brought death into the world, with all its repulsive features of suffering, disease, and dissolution. The penalty of sin is paid by all of us, partly in the body, but chiefly in the soul. There is the darkened intellect, the weakened will, the rebellious senses, the bent of nature towards evil, and the house, built to be the habitation of God, invaded by Satan!

Nothing in reality is fouler than the leprosy of

sin. Like a fatal poison, filling the veins of the soul, eating into its substance without consuming it, it overflows on to the body.

No man could survive the shock to his system of the sight of a soul in mortal sin. We are spared this, but are disgusted enough by certain effects visible in man's conduct and in his body. It not unfrequently happens that men, even in a state of grace, are repulsive to our sensitive feelings, and that our fastidiousness receives offence at every turn.

We must overcome these feelings and facts by the use of various strong and persuasive considerations.

1. We are ourselves of the same clay as those who trouble us. It is due not to ourselves, but to Divine Providence, if we are not repulsive as they are in appearance and in other ways. But, we may ask, have we never been a torment to our parents, and to others with whom we have lived? They bore with us; we must now bear with others.

We have ourselves, perhaps, offended God more grievously and against greater light than these poor people who do not attract us. Their faults, perhaps, are on the surface, while ours are in the very substance of the soul.

2. A Priest is a physician. Physicians, surgeons and nurses deal with all kinds of loathsome people, and perform most repulsive and disgusting operations. With gentleness, sympathy and skill they watch night and day over the sick in mind and body; bear with the peevishness and impatience of the unbalanced temper; handle with tender care the decaying flesh that breeds putrid sores and foul eruptions; and spare neither time nor pains simply to prolong life for a few weeks or days, or to bring some slight alleviation to sufferings that must shortly end. The professional pride and pleasure felt in overcoming natural repugnances in attending to the ills of the flesh that perishes, ought to be felt by Priests in dealing with immortal souls. There can be no comparison between the dignity of work for souls and that of work so cheerfully undertaken for the body.

3. We have already spoken of God's estimate of the human soul. But some further points may serve to spur our zeal. By saving a soul you give a distinct pleasure to the Eternal Father, who ardently desires to see His adopted children come home to His paternal embrace.

You render a personal service to Jesus Christ, who yearns to apply to souls His precious blood

and the sacraments, and has made Himself dependent upon us for this purpose. He is not satisfied with the number engaged in this work, but in His anxious love bids us pray most especially that more labourers may be found and sent as Priests into the harvest.

You render Him a still more personal service, because by saving souls you become the saviour of His mystical body. His glorious humanity in heaven desires its own perfection by the accession of all its divinely preordained human members. Every soul that is saved becomes a glorified member of the body of Christ, which is thus perfected through our exertions.

4. Then think of the horrible malice and tyranny of Satan—the implacable enemy of God and man. To you is given power to strike and defeat him; to you power to protect and defend your brethren against his wiles and deceits.

Unable to establish his supremacy in heaven, he aims at being worshipped as God upon earth. Though his power has been curtailed since the crucifixion, it is incredible what vast multitudes still abandon themselves entirely to his influence. There are people and regions over which he still reigns supreme. "That old serpent, who is called

the devil and Satan, seduceth the whole world"; "He causeth the earth and them that dwell thereon to adore the beast"; "Both little and great, rich and poor, freemen and bondmen" yield to his fascinations. St. John saw "all the earth in admiration after the beast."

St. Paul in like manner admonishes us that "our wrestling is against spirits of wickedness in the high places," and that men are constantly exposed to "the fiery darts of the most wicked one." And he warns us that "evil men and seducers shall grow worse and worse: erring, and driving into error."

The devil is everywhere, using the wicked as his puppets and the lusts of the flesh as baits. His most subtle device is to lie in ambush, persuading men that he does not even exist, and that the eternal hell, which Christ declared was the portion of the devil and the wicked, is no better than a fable.

Oh, how noble and glorious the calling of Priests, who, like Michael and his angels, are constantly engaged in destroying the empire of Satan!

5. Think of the innumerable multitudes who die without baptism before attaining such use of reason as to distinguish clearly between right and

wrong, and who will therefore never see and enjoy God. Though not in the torments of hell, their lot is most pitiable, and it might in countless instances have been prevented had men been more willing to devote themselves to the salvation of their neighbours.

Think, too, of that dense and horrid procession of the damned which, hour by hour, minute by minute, without break or cessation, descends into hell. Listen to the heartrending moans, to the unavailing screams of pain and terror that rise out of that seething pool of fire. *Cruciar in hac flamma.*

Think on the pain of loss, the mental agony, the worm of remorse that dieth not, the eternal hatred, the eternal rage, the eternal despair.

It is of faith that all this is eternal, but it is also of faith that no one is condemned to eternal punishment except through his own deliberate fault.

God gives sufficient grace to every soul, though ever so far removed from the influences of civilisation and from the knowledge of Christianity, to avoid the eternal torments of hell. It is of faith that no one is ever condemned unjustly.

But there are many Divine interventions and

innumerable graces, beyond the *sufficient*, which God desires to bestow if man will only obey the commandment to love his neighbour. To illustrate this doctrine. If a man be duly warned by another, or by his reason, that to throw himself off a cliff will be to dash himself to pieces, and yet deliberately casts himself into the precipice, he has himself only to blame, and deserves the consequences. Neither justice nor reason say that he ought to be restored to life and to be given another chance.

But we can conceive a man receiving much more than one such warning. Friends may follow him everywhere to save him from his own folly; they may draw him away from the danger; they may fence off the precipice; they may set guards to watch. The chances of his destruction will diminish according to the love, the zeal, the activities of his brethren. And so it is with the soul in the order of eternal life.

God has founded a Church as a place of safety, has placed His graces, His blood, and Himself in our hands, wherewith we may draw men away from danger, fortify them against temptation, and, what is more, even restore them again and again to life, by a stupendous miracle of grace.

We are all brethren of one family, and ought to be guardians of one another. God has made our neighbour's happiness and salvation largely dependent upon us. Whatever we do for Him, God esteems as being done to Himself. And in addition to this, He communicates His own divine powers to Priests, that they may bring men to salvation by His mercy.

All who are lost are lost, indeed, through their own fault. But millions and millions of these would be saved did men but fly to their assistance, as they might do, with the superabundant succours which God has provided.

6. Think, too, of all that is implied in securing to a man his eternal inheritance. Think of what that is—more than command of the whole world, more than possession of the universe. It is to put him into final and eternal possession of the infinite, for which he was created.

Men are often moved by generous impulses to give food, clothing, and enjoyment to their fellow-creatures; and it is right that they should do so, for man is composed of body as well as of soul, and Our Lord prescribed the performance of all the corporal works of mercy. But what is the little taste of happiness that lasts for a day

compared with the divine torrent of pleasure and delight enjoyed, without the possibility of it ever ceasing or growing less, by a soul that you have sent to heaven! The amount of pleasure, both as to intensity and its duration, given by the salvation of a single soul, far and away exceeds all the earthly and transient happiness that it is within the power of the most generous philanthropy to bestow upon countless recipients.

7. And, lastly, think of the intense and eternal gratitude with which souls saved by your instrumentality will bless and praise you for ever. You have proved yourself to them more than father and mother, wife or husband. You have been their saviour, their Christ. And when they come to learn that their sins and imperfections were a trouble and a disgust to you, and that you bore with them because of the greatness of your love, oh, how they will repay you during all eternity for what you suffered for them in time!

Section III.—Illustrations from the Scriptures and the Saints.

Bear with me, if I insist on this subject, and bring forward messages from the Scriptures and

examples from the lives of the Saints. The Apostolic path is full of honour. It is strewn with precious stones. *Quam speciosi pedes evangelizantium pacem, evangelizantium bona!*

Annunciate de die in diem salutare ejus.

Annunciate inter gentes gloriam ejus.

Annunciate inter gentes opera ejus.

Væ mihi est, si non evangelizavero, cries out St. Paul.

Weigh well the words of the Lord to Ezechiel:—

"Thou shalt hear the word out of My mouth, and shalt tell it them from Me.

"If, when I say to the wicked, Thou shalt surely die: thou declare it not to him, nor speak to him, that he may be converted from his wicked way, and live: the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but *I will require his blood at thy hand.*

"But if thou give warning to the wicked, and he be not converted from his wickedness, and from his evil way: he indeed shall die in his iniquity, *but thou hast delivered thy soul.*

"Moreover if the just man shall turn away from his justice, and shall commit iniquity: I will lay a stumbling-block before him; he shall die, because thou hast not given him warning:

he shall die in his sin, and his justices which he hath done, shall not be remembered: *but I will require his blood at thy hand.*

"But if thou warn the just man, that the just may not sin, and he doth not sin: *living he shall live, because thou hast warned him, and thou hast delivered thy soul*" (Ezech. iii.).

Theodoret, in his "Religious History," gives several examples of monks and fathers of the desert leaving their solitude, and the care of their own souls, in order to work for their neighbour.

Ammian pressed St. Eusebius with many arguments to leave the desert.

"Tell me," said he, "whom dost thou seek to please by leading this hard life in the midst of filth and misery?"

"I seek," said Eusebius, "to please God, the Lawgiver and the Master."

"Since thou lovest Him," replied Ammian, "I will show thee a way by which thou shalt greatly increase in His love, and in the service of Him whom thou lovest. Now, all thy care and pains being bestowed upon thyself, I cannot conceal from thee that there lurketh therein a somewhat too great love of thyself. For the Divine law rules that we must love our neighbour as ourself.

To make many rich is the mark of true charity. This was called by Paul the fulfilling of the law: 'He that loveth his neighbour hath fulfilled the law' (Rom. xiii.); and again he wrote: 'All the law is fulfilled in one word: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself' (Gal. v.).

"The Lord Himself, on Peter confessing that he loved Him more than others, commanded him, saying: 'Feed My sheep' (John xxi.).

"Those who neglect to feed the flock He reprehends and condemns by the mouth of His prophet. 'Woe to the shepherds of Israel, who fed themselves; but My flocks are not pastured by their shepherds.'

"He therefore ordered the great Elias, who was solitary, to leave his solitude and live in the midst of the wicked; and that second Elias, John the Baptist, reared in the desert, was in like manner ordered to serve his neighbour, by baptising and preaching on the banks of the Jordan.

"Wherefore, as thou also art an ardent lover of the God who made thee, see that thou teach many others to become lovers of Him; for this is exceedingly pleasing to Him. He made Ezechiel 'a watchman,' and bid him warn and preach to

His people. And Jonas he commanded to go to Nineve and preach in it, and because he refused he was cast into the sea."

And when Ammian had said all this and much more, Eusebius came out from his voluntary imprisonment in the desert, and he and those with him took care of the souls to whom Ammian sent him.

Hear that most practical and human of teachers among the Fathers, St. John Chrysostom :—

"Though thou bestowest immense riches on the poor, thou dost more in converting a single soul. Why? Because nothing is so pleasing to God, and so much His care, as the salvation of souls." And in commenting on the words, "Be ye imitators of Me, as I am of Christ," he says: "This is the rule of perfect charity, this the certain end, this the summit of perfection, to seek the common good of all. In this the Apostle says he was an imitator of Christ. For in nothing can we become closer imitators of Christ than in the care and service we bestow upon our neighbour.

"What is equivalent to the care of souls? Neither fasting, nor sleeping on the ground, nor vigils, nor anything else can equal it. Think

how often thy mouth has sinned by uttering either profane, obscene, covetous or angry words; but thou hast taken charge of a sinner to convert him. By this alone thou canst blot out all the stains upon thy soul. Blot out, do I say? Thou makest thy mouth to be as the mouth of God. What can equal the honour of that? It is not I who make this promise. God Himself has declared it. 'If thou wilt separate the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as My mouth' (Jer. xv.).

"'He who causeth a sinner to be converted from the error of his way, shall save his soul from death, and shall cover a multitude of sins' (James v.)."

To the contemplative Saints God is wont to give a clear and steady light which enables them to realise the great practical truths of salvation with a wonderful fervour and discernment. In their close union with God they burned with Apostolic zeal for souls.

St. Catherine of Genoa one day exclaimed:—

"O Lord, thou commandest me to love my neighbour, and yet I can love only Thee, and I desire that no love of the creature shall ever mix itself with the love which I bear to Thee. What then shall I do?'

A Divine voice then spoke as follows in the interior of her soul:—

"My daughter, the soul that loves Me ought to love what I love; she ought then to love her neighbour after God, to work with both body and soul to promote his salvation, and never to shun opportunities, however painful and dangerous, for helping him.

"Love of thy neighbour is an infallible sign of the love thou bearest to God, as the Lord is the Creator and Father of all.

"It is by love of his neighbour that the creature will repay the great love God bears to him; not being able to do good to His Divine Majesty, who is in no need of us, he endeavours, for love of God, to do good to the suffering members of Jesus Christ. Charity to our neighbour consists in wishing him the same good that we desire for ourselves; in sacrificing our temporal interests for the salvation of his soul; and in doing him good purely for the love of God, and without looking for gratitude or anything else."

It is said of St. Teresa that, when in reading the Lives of the Saints she fell upon the life of any one who had converted many souls to God, she became affected by a great devotion and a

singular tenderness, and she would say that she envied these far more than she did the martyrs. She entertained, in like manner, a particular esteem and love for all who were engaged in helping their neighbour by reading, preaching, visiting, and ministering to them in different ways. She felt great compassion for the fatigues and sufferings of such persons. And when any of them fell ill, she would pray and get prayers that they might speedily recover and return to their work of saving souls. And it not unfrequently happened, when any of these persons died, that she shed many tears (though she was not a woman easily moved to tears) over the loss of a labourer in the Church on earth, who was gaining so many souls for heaven.

In her "Path of Perfection" she tells us that she founded all her convents with the Apostolic intention of promoting the conversion of souls. "As so many offend God in a multitude of ways, her nuns should pray for their conversion, and most fervently for all engaged in the defence of the Church, for preachers and other learned men engaged in her service." One of her biographers says that "she often spent whole nights in prayer and tears to obtain the conversion of souls, and

especially of those held in heresy, and she would have given a thousand lives if by so doing she could have saved a single soul. During the forty years she spent in the exercise of prayer, she asked nothing more earnestly of God than the spread of God's glory and the increase of holy Church; and she was ready to remain a long time in purgatory herself, if only so God could become better known and more loved by men."

Of St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi we read that she was inflamed with an ardent love and admiration for all engaged in the propagation of the Faith, and that in reading of the conversions made by St. Francis Xavier in Japan, she swooned away through the intensity of her desire to help in those conversions and to suffer martyrdom. She used to say that she envied little birds that can fly where they like, because she desired to traverse all the world in converting souls. In her sleep she used to talk of the conversion of the heathen and of the salvation of souls.

Her active co-operation in this matter consisted in constantly offering up to God the most precious blood, and for the same intention she applied the words, prayers, communions, and penances of her Religious.

When she collected together in the morning the Religious who were under her, she was wont to say to them:—

"Let us offer to God for the salvation of souls all that we shall do to-day." Or, "Let us ask of God to convert as many souls as we shall take steps in the convent during the day." Or, "Let us ask for the salvation of as many souls as we shall pronounce words in the office, or shall make stiches with our needle."

One day she was most violently assailed by temptations against faith: nothing she could do brought any relief; she perspired all over with the effort and the struggle; she most earnestly besought Our Lord to hear her; she seemed abandoned by God for a long time, and instead of relief her state became more and more painful. The thought of the salvation of souls came to her mind, and with a loud voice she cried out, "Let us lift up our hearts to desire the conversion of all those who believe"; and at once all the temptation disappeared, and she was left happy and in great peace.

Never a day, and scarcely an hour, passed without her showing the desire for the salvation of souls that was consuming her heart. No

occupation seemed capable of turning her mind from this thought.

In her ecstasies she frequently spoke of this, her favourite theme. Once she said: "If God were to ask me, as He did St. Thomas of Aquin, what reward I would ask for my labours and sufferings, I would reply at once, the conversion of souls."

This constant zeal for souls was no doubt a special grace granted to her. But we read that she herself used to feed and excite this zeal by dwelling on three considerations:—

First. She considered the love of God for souls —how much Jesus Christ suffered for them, and with how much love; looking upon them as the inheritance given Him by His eternal Father.

As she intensely loved God and her spouse Jesus Christ, she felt that she must love and work to her utmost for the salvation of souls, that God and Jesus Christ love and yearn after with so much zeal.

Secondly. She thought of the extraordinary beauty of a soul in the state of grace, and of the wonderful pleasure that God has in such a soul, and then again of how great is this good of God's pleasure for the soul itself.

Thirdly. She meditated on how deformed and

shameful is a soul in mortal sin, and how lamentable its state. Beholding the turpitude of mortal sin and its heinous malice, she fell into an excruciating agony, crying out aloud in Latin: *Circumdederunt me dolores mortis, dolores inferni circumdederunt me, comedit me dolor inferni, pro multitudine iniquitatum nostrarum.*

By such considerations she excited her own zeal for the salvation of souls, and by using these and similar considerations we may all follow her blessed example.

St. Charles Borromeo, St. Francis Xavier, St. Francis of Sales, St. Vincent of Paul, and others continually fed their own souls with the motives that were best calculated to set them on fire with love of their neighbour. And do we expect to burn with Apostolic ardours if we do not seriously turn over all these persuasive motives, and do nothing to set our cold hearts on fire with the love of God and of our neighbour?

St. Charles, in his Constitution of the Oblates of St. Ambrose, gives a long and touching series of such motives; and I will quote a passage from them, with which to end this conference:—

Considerent quanta quamque ampla sit haec messis, quanta spiritualium bonorum egestas,

quanta salutariter agentium penuria, quam pauci veri ministri, qui sancto desiderio accensi, suis commodis neglectis, terrenisque utilitatibus, solam Christi Domini Nostri gloriam animarumque salutem spectant.

Praeterea si constituunt ante oculos, plurimos maximosque labores, quibus SS. Apostoli pro animarum salute, dum in terris degerent perfuncti sunt, atque inter S. Pauli perpetuas vigilias, itinera, conatus, et praeclaras contentiones atque actiones.

Respiciant innumerabiles martyres, SS. Episcopos et sacerdotes, qui sancto animarum zelo fragrantes, omne periculorumque genus, libentissimo animo subierunt. Ut autem eorum qui in misero peccati mortalis statu perseverant, misereri sciant, nullumque laborem ad eos tam ingenti miseria liberandos subterfugiant, immo vero libenti animo in hoc maxime laborant secum ipsi cogitent, quantis in calamitatibus, periculis, horribilibusque malis versantur, qui peccato mortali adstricti tenentur.

Let us always attach the highest possible value to souls. No matter under what exterior form they may be found, they deserve to be treated with the reverence and honour due to royal

princes and princesses who are heirs to a kingdom. The miner and the analyst know the worth of auriferous quartz, no matter how hard, rough, or unsightly it may be; they know that nothing but the proper treatment is needed to set free the precious ore with which it is charged. Bear this thought in mind when dealing with the souls that do not naturally attract you.

CONFERENCE XVII.

APOSTOLIC TRIUMPHS.

VENIENTES AUTEM VENIENT CUM EXSULTATIONE PORTANTES MANIPULOS SUOS.

—*Ex communi Apostolorum.*

THE Church in her Breviary ushers in the Feasts of the Apostles by reading the following Gregorian comment on the words, "This is My commandment, that ye love one another as I have loved you":—

"Even as a tree having but one root bringeth forth many branches, so, if the root be love, many virtues do spring therefrom. Neither is the branch of good works green, if it abide not in the root of love. Therefore the commandments of the Lord are manifold and yet one. Manifold, indeed, by their diversity of working, but one as concerning the root of love."

In this way the Church would have Apostolic men understand that however diverse and manifold are the labours of the Apostolic life, their

crown and reward are given in respect of the love from which they spring.

It would be difficult to insist too much on the importance of love for Jesus Christ and for His cause, because it is this love alone that is capable of spurring us on to engage in all kinds of laborious undertakings, very many of which must turn out, humanly speaking, to be failures. Just as when the sower cast his seed over the field, he knew even beforehand that but a small portion of that seed would ever bear a harvest, and that the rest would be seed and labour lost, yet love carried him on in his task until the end of the day.

He who loves can do all things. With the tears in his eyes, he perseveres to the end; while he who loves not sits down overwhelmed with sadness.

As the Holy Ghost declared that the sowers of the Word went on weeping and scattering their seed, so He also declared that they shall continually keep coming on to their heavenly home and Master, *venientes autem venient*—no longer in tears, but *cum exsultatione, portantes manipulos suos.* They who have sown amid so much sorrow and loss shall, after a time, with immense joy carry home to their Master their heavy and rich sheaves of corn.

What do these sheaves consist of? What is the corn? If our labours have sprung out of the root of love, they bear two kinds of fruit.

The first kind is the actual results that have been aimed at. What are these results? The salvation and sanctification of souls. We must thirst and burn and work for souls. Our mission is to souls. We spend ourselves and die for souls, out of love for Jesus Christ. Souls, souls, souls, the salvation of souls! The love of Jesus Christ is the root, in which even love for souls must abide. The sheaves, therefore, are full and heavy with most precious souls that we have led, converted, sanctified, saved, by casting into them the inspirations, truths, graces, that have been likened unto seed—"the seed is the Word of God." Souls are the golden ears, filled with virtues as the ear is with grains.

The second kind of fruit consists of the rich harvest of good works grown on the field of our own soul. How unspeakably dear and precious this is in the eyes of God may be gathered by a very simple consideration.

Our Lord Jesus Christ presented two things to His eternal Father. He presented to Him the souls that had availed themselves of His

Passion and Death, and were thereby sanctified and saved. These, alas, are the smaller number of mankind. Still, so unspeakably beautiful, costly and godlike is a soul, that the offering was most acceptable. Moreover, the value of the offering depends not upon numbers so much as upon excellence and perfection. One soul raised to great sanctity gives more glory to God than many souls that are less perfect. But what else did He offer that was infinitely pleasing to God? His life; His life of labour and humiliation: the life of one who was ever a sower, *ibat et flebat mittens semina sua.* And oh! the prodigality and waste of grace and of effort during the whole of His intercourse with man! One drop of the precious blood would have sufficed, and He gave the whole unto the last drop. What more could He have done that He has not done? The offering of all His holy desires, aspirations, words, works, sorrows and sufferings formed an infinitely richer offering than the souls that were limited in number and in perfection. The infinite waste of His Life and Passion was an infinite store of honour, glory, and satisfaction to God. They were the gift of the Man-God, the gift of His life to God.

That which is clear and obvious in the life of our Elder Brother is true and certain in our life, *servata proportione*. God is glorified by all that we undertake and attempt by His inspiration, even though our efforts have not ended in the salvation of souls.

What man is there who, having employed labourers to spend their time and their strength in ploughing a field, in diving into the bowels of the earth for mineral, or in any other occupation, would refuse to pay them their hire, because the field was barren, the earth gave up no mineral, and the occupation turned out fruitless? If the sower who waters the soil with his sweat is to be paid only according to the harvest that is afterwards garnered, he will remain unrequited for at least three-fourths of his toil.

If a man refuse to sow the seed unless he be morally certain that the souls he has in view will be saved, he is not an evangelical labourer, he is not an Apostle or a servant of Jesus Christ.

Yet we have known worthy Priests who not only act themselves on the principle that it is not worth while making efforts unless there be a moral certainty of their resulting in the salvation of souls, but discourage young Priests from

undertaking works of zeal, because they may not be successful.

Take two Priests: one fulfils his manifest obligations and then spares himself all labour and trouble, using his time, as he says, "for himself"—that is, spending it according to his inclination; the other considers that all his time and energy belong to Our Lord. When he has discharged his manifest obligations, he gives himself up entirely to plans and efforts for the salvation of souls. Without recklessly and blindly following methods that cannot possibly succeed, he tries many plans, and he is ever sowing the seed. He is always at work for the salvation of souls.

Which of these two Priests will give greater glory to God? Which will have the heavier sheaves? Which will exult with the greater joy, and shine with the brighter diadem of glory in the presence of God?

If we analyse the gift that the Apostolic labourer makes to God when he is prodigal of his time and efforts in sowing the seed, we shall find that every exertion and every sacrifice he makes is a gift of his life—it is his own soul that he thereby gives to God. His weariness and suffering in God's service is a reiterated

sacrifice of his soul to God. And God may account the life of such an Apostolic Priest as far more glorious and precious in His sight than many souls, who have not attained to his perfection. The reward that He will measure out will be in proportion to the generosity of the service, and not according to the actual number of conversions he may have made.

The Office of the Apostles quotes St. Jerome as to the reward that Apostles will receive for the fruitless efforts made to convert souls to the faith. He says that the Apostles will eventually be put over them as their judges to condemn them, *quia vobis credentibus illi credere noluerunt.* Thus the Apostles by preaching to unbelievers obtain eventually a victory over them, by sitting above them on thrones to judge and condemn them for having refused to hear their voice.

It is most important to insist upon the glorious character and the splendid reward attached to all those generous Apostolic labours that seem to bear no fruit in this world. The devil suggests that God is not so very good to us after all, in that for one prize there are at least a hundred blanks for the efforts we make in His service.

But it is just the contrary. There are no blanks, as far as God is concerned; every single act we perform out of love for Him bears a prize.

It is true that in this life we sow in tears; but each tear is the tear and the sacrifice of a generous soul, and is most pleasing to God; and therefore each tear earns for the soul a fresh reward that is of eternal duration. The sheaves shall be heavy with souls—souls converted—and they shall be heavier still with the soul of the Apostolic sower, multiplied in value a thousand and a hundred thousand times by the tears and efforts that were accounted by the eyes of earth as fruitless.

Lastly, if Our Lord is infinitely lovable and dear to us, not only because of the waste of love exhibited in His Passion, but because of the waste of inspirations and graces with which He incessantly visits us—graces that we reject or neglect—shall not we also become dear to Him by multiplying our efforts to save the souls He has redeemed, far beyond any result our efforts may have upon those souls? If He is to be loved for His prodigality of love, are not we also to be loved and rewarded by Him on account of an Apostolic prodigality that knows no measure or cessation?

A final argument may be drawn from analogy, to encourage us to persevere in Apostolic labours.

We know that God always answers every good prayer, but not always in the way we propose. No good prayer ever remains barren and fruitless. While thus personal merit is inalienable, their satisfactory and impetratory powers may be applied just where God pleases. They may be bearing fruit in distant regions of the earth, among souls in Purgatory that have been there for centuries, or merely for hours, or they may be stored up for application to souls that are yet unborn. It may be all hidden from our eyes, but we know that no good prayer is barren. It bears real fruit.

In like manner, the separate acts of the weary, thankless work carried on by Apostolic men, which seem to them to be absolutely lost and worthless, because they see no response whatever, have not only their personal merit, but are gathered up by God and are applied wherever and whenever He sees fit. The physical fatigue of journeys, visits, kind words and exhortation, which seem to be so much waste time and energy, are being gathered up and carried by the hand of God to other souls more needy or more deserving, to whom He gives His grace in direct consequence of the acts

which you directed to other places and to other souls.

So that one of the most marvellous revelations that will strike upon our wondering minds at the judgment will be the way in which, by our actions and labours quite as much as by our prayers and penances, we have played a great part over an immense theatre, dealing with souls, and covering spaces and times, such as we had never dreamt of. Thus, while to our limited perceptions there is an extraordinary waste going on, in the economy of God there is no waste whatever, but everything done for His love bears fruit, thirty, sixty, or a hundred fold.

Here, then, are the joys and the triumphs, in this world and in the life to come, of the Apostolic labourer. They are offered to all, but they must spring from the root of love.

We must ever live under delusions until the end of all things shall have come, and we join in the eternal song of triumph: "The kingdom of this world is become our Lord's and His Christ's, and He shall reign for ever and ever. Amen."

CONFERENCE XVIII.

APOSTOLIC DISINTERESTEDNESS.

ECU NOS RELIQUIMUS OMNIA, QUID ERGO EUT NOBIS?
—*Ex communi Apostolorum.*

DISINTERESTEDNESS has always been a mark of Apostolic men. And nothing so forcibly strikes the world and the enemies of Christ, or so extorts their admiration, as disinterestedness in a Priest. If a Priest be thought a self-seeker, anxious to become rich, he at once loses the esteem of the world. He has become a worldling (1 Tim. vi.). "There is not a more wicked thing than to love money" (Eccl. x.).

In this the great Apostle of the Gentiles has given us a splendid and practical example. He says:—

"I speak not as it were for want. For I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, to be content therewith. I know both how to be brought low, and I know how to abound: (everywhere, and in all things I am instructed) both to be full, and to be hungry; both to abound, and to suffer need. I

can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me" (Phil. iv.).

I make no vow of poverty. I retain my freedom, and everywhere and in all things I am instructed to be content with Providence in whatever way it may deal with me.

"When the Apostle abounded he made good use of what he had," says St. John Chrysostom; "for what he received he spent upon others; he emptied himself for them. He did not cease to labour or relax his life. This is to know how to make good use of what we have."

In like manner St. Charles Borromeo knew how to abound. He possessed a large yearly revenue, and spent it on works of education and on various other charities. He was a secular Priest, had no vow of poverty, dispensed a large income, and yet was always poor, because he knew in what way an Apostolic man ought to abound. Addressing his Priests in a homily, he said :—

"Know you how great is the perfection of complete poverty? How great and valuable the assistance which it renders to fishers of souls? How strictly the Lord required its observance in those first fishermen, the Apostles, whom He permitted to 'carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes'?"

"Take as your pattern," he said on another occasion, "the lives of the holy Fathers; after the example of the Saints, live personally in such poverty that you may be able to give for your churches, for the adornment of your altars, and for other sacred objects—not the overflow of superfluity, but the savings stolen by self-denial from your necessary maintenance."

St. John Chrysostom answers an objection, that we have not the power of miracles, but that the Apostles converted the world by miracles, and he says: "No, not by miracles, but by contempt of wealth, by contempt of glory, and disinterestedness and freedom from worldly affairs. Had they raised ten thousand dead to life, and been wanting in contempt for the riches and the glory of this world, so far from converting souls, they would have been treated as impostors."

The greatest renovation of the Church ever effected was that wrought by "the poor man of Assisi." His weapons were the love of Jesus Christ and personal poverty. Leo XIII. has bid us study his example and imbibe his spirit, in our contest with the evils of the present day.

Look at the wealth, the worldly power, the pride

of England. No single nation has ever possessed these things to the same degree.

They form the very atmosphere and breath on which men live. They create a national character, and the individuals who make up society are insensibly moulded by their influence. Experience proves them to be fatal enemies to the Cross of Christ. Our national wealth and power, our spirit of independence and of pride, recoil from Christian humility and from the obedience due to the divine authority of the Church.

God desires to make use of Apostolic disinterestedness to disintegrate these evil influences that the world opposes to His designs of mercy. This is not a case of *similia similibus*, but of *contraria contrariis curantur*.

The diocesan clergy have many opportunities for the practice of even severe Apostolic poverty. Many missions barely furnish the Priest with subsistence, if even they do that. Many posts are so ill provided that the Priest sent to them must lead a life of very real Apostolic poverty, such as is not exceeded in the strictest religious orders.

The young Priest coming to the mission should prepare himself for this. He is prepared for it,

not merely by the knowledge of his liability to be thrown into such a position, but by religiously facing the position, considering it, and realising in his own mind the Apostolic principles upon which he must be prepared to live.

St. Vincent Ferrer quotes with approval the saying of a holy man, that "To be poor is a thing that merits no praise, but what renders poverty meritorious is the loving acceptance of it, and the suffering with joy for Christ's sake whatever poverty entails upon us."

And then the Saint goes on to say: "Unhappily there are many who glory only in the name of poverty, who embrace it merely on the condition that they shall want for nothing. They desire to pass for the friends of poverty, but strenuously shun its daily accompaniments—namely, hunger and thirst, contempt and humiliation. Such is not the example of Him who, being sovereignly rich, became poor for our sake; such is not what we discover in the acts and instructions of the Apostles."

The young Priest, therefore, while preparing for the place that may be assigned to him by his Bishop, should consider well this truth: that though it be true that poverty, like sufferings

and sickness, are not things pleasant and desirable in themselves, but are things we naturally shun and escape from, yet we must gladly accept them when we behold the hand of God presenting them to us; when we know that our cheerful acceptance of them will give Him honour and glory, and that His intention is to bestow upon us an eternal reward, besides a great increase of His love of us even in this life.

The martyrs assuredly had no natural liking for the horrible and excruciating torments to which they were subjected as a trial to their faith, but they were able to rejoice and to praise and bless God in the midst of their sufferings, and to laugh at their tormentors, because they saw the will of God and His most loving providence in all these things. The same Divine Will, the same wise Providence presides over the passing poverty, hardships, and sufferings of a mission as over the trials of martyrdom. Such poverty and privations are to be loved and accepted, because they unite our will to the Divine Will, because they are designed to work out in our souls a special likeness to Our Lord Himself.

It is sad when a Priest does not sanctify the circumstances in which God places him, but takes

them simply with a stoical temper, as a man of the world takes his troubles. It is sad, because the loss to God's glory and to the Priest's soul is unimaginably great; and it is incurred, for the most part, not from want of faith, but from want of thought. It is easy for a heart that is under a really deep sense of obligation to Our Blessed Saviour to turn all privations and pains into grateful acts of love.

What has been said as to enduring poverty on the mission may be applied to other things which junior Priests have sometimes to endure, such as inferior accommodation, poor food, small stipends, a subordinate position, harder work, and so forth. All these things test the Apostolic spirit of disinterestedness.

Among the duties that may often be imposed upon the young Priest is the distasteful one of having to collect money. Is not this in contradiction to all that we have been urging? No; quite the contrary. If we analyse this disagreeable task, what does it come to?

1. First, the Apostolic Priests, in this as in other missionary countries, have to be builders as well as teachers. They must, therefore, collect the materials and must pay for them. Other-

wise the people will have neither schools nor churches.

2. Next, they do not beg for themselves, but for the people, especially for the poor. No one else can beg from the people as their Priest can; they will not give to any other as they will to him. They know that he represents each one of the flock, that he is *servus servorum Dei.* They feel that he has a right to invite them, to urge them, to religious works of charity, just because he is their Priest and the representative of God, who is charity itself. The Priest who collects the pence of the people, for the church or the schools, is thus discharging a recognised function; and it is no mean, but an Apostolic function.

3. Thirdly, the work of collecting is very laborious, often it is humbling to our pride and spirit of independence; it is painful, because we desire to give rather than to receive. We are exposed to rebuffs, and even to insults. But who does not know that humiliations of this kind, borne cheerfully and for the love of God, bring down streams of grace and blessing upon our soul and upon our work?

An Apostolic man must not, therefore, be above undertaking the work of collector, if he be asked

to help in providing for the wants of the faithful.

At the same time it may not be out of place to make this remark—that it is a detestable and injurious state of things when the people always connect the Priest's visit with a demand for money; when people say, "He never comes except when he wants something."

There are two ways of anticipating such a reproach. One is to pay two pastoral visits for every visit paid as a collector. Another is to do the house to house collecting by means of an appointed staff of lay collectors, accompanying them from time to time in order to give authority to the collectors and encouragement to the people to contribute generously.

It is not contrary to the disinterestedness of which we have been speaking for a Priest to receive the fees which are customary for various services rendered. The labourer is worthy of his hire; the ox shall not be muzzled that treadeth out the corn; and they who serve the altar shall live by the altar.

But the great Archbishop of Braga, the venerable Bartholomew de Martyribus, quotes with strong approval these words from one of the

Fathers: *Clerici, qui fideliter laborant in Ecclesia, non expectant hic stipendia temporalia ab Ecclesia, quasi praemia laborum (quia stipendia suae militiae non nisi coelestia sunt), sed solum necessaria ad sustentationem vitae.*

Above all, a Priest must be careful to avoid giving even the impression that he is greedy for money, or that he is scheming to obtain fees and gifts for himself. In many missions it is wisely arranged that all parochial fees shall go into a common fund and be divided at the end of the month, upon a fixed scale of distribution, between the Rector and his assistants.

We may also add that there may be a blameworthy parsimony and a want of disinterestedness on the part of Rectors in withholding or in not offering the usual fees or honoraria when they can be afforded, as well as in seeking for fees with insistence or anxiety. But that is a detestable spirit which looks always to gain, like a tradesman whose eye is on the till. It was thus that Judas began his career of meanness, ending in the most heinous of crimes. Avarice is one of the three dangers against which Leo XIII. desires the clergy to be cautioned by those set over them.

CONFERENCE XIX.

RESOLUTIONS AS TO CERTAIN PRACTICES.

VOTA MEA DOMINO REDDAM IN CONSPECTU OMNIS POPULI EJUS.

—*Ex communi Apostolorum.*

IF we are "the fellow-citizens of the Saints and of the household of God," our manners and tone of conduct ought to be in harmony with such blessed society. But it is not easy, indeed it is impossible, to raise our lives to such an elevation if we are to be left to ourselves to do it. Therefore it is that we are taught in the Divine Office to pray that God will surround us with so bright a light that we may see things in His splendour, and be directed in our resolutions even by God's grace. *Sit splendor Domini Dei nostri super nos, et opera manuum nostrarum dirige, super nos, et opus manuum nostrarum dirige.*

Many details of practical conduct ought to be considered and settled by a Priest for himself, upon some plain reason or principle, before he enters

upon his career, otherwise he will expose himself to drift with whatever current he may get into. He will be happier if he has already made up his mind when questions arise, than if he is taken by surprise and has to act hastily or in doubt.

First of all, there are certain general principles which should be accepted as immovable axioms.

Many things are permissible to and in a layman which ought not to be tolerated for a Priest.

The Council of Trent says: *Serva regulam et regula servabit te;* by which St. Gregory meant not merely the observance of hours, and of certain regular duties, but of a rule that should protect the Priest against the fashions of the day and the special dangers to which he must be exposed.

Next, we shall hardly preach self-denial and mortification to others if we do not practise it ourselves. All spiritual writers insist on the practice of mortification as a virtue absolutely necessary for a spiritual life. "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me." The *abneget semetipsum* of the Gospel ought to be continually ringing in our ears. Fasting and severe bodily austerities may be impossible to many; but rules voluntarily imposed, whereby we mortify ourselves in certain

definite particulars, help us most usefully to the constant practice of mortification—the *abneget semetipsum* so essential for an Apostolic man.

St. Paul says he who runs in a race or enters the lists to fight gets rid of superfluities, and confines himself strictly to that which is necessary. It is a good rule not to multiply necessities, which we do when we attach ourselves to superfluities. A Priest who has to make his way in poverty, and who desires to give everything he can to His Master's cause, will certainly study—and practise —"the art of doing without," so far as his own personal life is concerned.

When a layman, you perhaps took part in certain worldly gatherings, amusements, sports, and games. You were freer in speech and manner in society, and permitted yourself many indulgences, which were then thought nothing of, because common to the class in which you lived. But other things are expected of a Priest. Society itself looks for a higher ideal of self-restraint, a more elevated standard of life and conduct in a Priest. The Priest whose aim is to pass himself off as precisely one with the laity secures to himself no respect for so doing; but behind his back the comments are often many and marked.

1. It would be praiseworthy to resolve never to put off the ecclesiastical dress, always to wear a coat conspicuously clerical as to cut and length, or, better still, a cassock. A dress that clearly marks out the wearer as a Catholic Priest is, first, a protection to the Priest himself, and, secondly, a notification of the existence and presence of the Catholic Church.

In the days of persecution Priests were bound to dress in disguise. But they are not allowed by the canons to do this now; and there is no good reason why they should not appear before the English people as Priests. Anglican clergymen go about habitually, wearing either some form of religious habit, or a cassock. They are borne with by the people while they do this, though they are known to be Protestants. It would be easier for Catholic Priests to wear the cassock in public, because they would be known to be wearing their own proper dress.

2. There are societies and gatherings that a Priest ought to avoid. Hunting fields, shooting parties, racecourses, and all gambling resorts are unfit places for a Priest. To take part in public football or cricket matches, and to spend much time in witnessing them, should be avoided. To

get up dances, and to be present at balls or dances, though promoted for charitable purposes, has been within the last few years again forbidden to the clergy by an order from the Holy See.

3. A young Priest will have to make up his mind whether he will resolve never to play cards, or if he does play, what restraints he will observe. It is not wrong to play cards as a recreation, or as an act of civility. But a man who says, "No, I never play," rids himself at once of much trouble and difficulty. He would do wisely to resolve never to play for money, however small the points; never to sit over the card-table for hours together, either by day or by night. *Principiis obsta.*

4. A missionary Priest must be brought into frequent relation, social and professional, with women. He will not forget that there is implanted in nature, for wise reasons, a mutual attraction between the sexes, which are supplementary one of the other; and that it is essential for the maintenance of virtue that, in his own case, he shall be on his guard against the growth and development of this attraction. It is manifest also that a Priest, who is bound to a life of celibacy, and who being an angel by office ought to

be an angel in purity, ought to be more circumspect and reserved than persons not so bound. The Holy Ghost warns us that a life of chastity is impossible to human nature without the assistance of Divine grace. This grace is never wanting to those who desire it, pray for it, and use such precautions as are possible and reasonable.

In this place it is not to the purpose to do more than offer a few suggestions. The failure to recognise the existence of this mutual attraction between the sexes is often the reason of many disagreeable and painful incidents. A young Priest calls at a house; there are probably one or more girls or young women there. Somehow or other he calls frequently, prolongs his visits, becomes very sociable. There is nothing wrong, nobody can say that there is; but there is the attraction, mutual or not, as the case may be. Parents who watch carefully over their children notice it, and observe upon it; or say quietly to themselves, "We had better be careful." This is not pleasant for the young Priest, who is absolutely innocent; but it is well that he should be alive to these possibilities.

Or again, gossiping with maid-servants, and

noticing them more than needful, may easily lead to comment; and indicates want of tact, want of knowledge of human nature, and want of knowledge of the world, or of what may be called matters of social detail. We say, then, first of all: entertain respect and even reverence for all women. The thought of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Our Mother, will help us to do that.

Secondly, among some people there is a certain roughness and familiarity of manner, where nothing wrong is meant. Let the Priest, however, always remember to keep "Hands off," and a sacerdotal reserve.

Next, it is better for a Priest never to fondle or kiss even children; not to call young ladies by their Christian names after they have become adults—unless they are his relatives. Forms of respect and reverence surround the Priest himself with reverence; and so far from diminishing, they increase the esteem and confidence in which he is held.

5. For many grave reasons the young Priest ought to face the question of the use of ardent spirits. It is not a sin to use them in moderation. It may be right to use them medicinally, if prescribed by a trustworthy medical man;

but many doctors are not trustworthy in this matter. If used medicinally, they must be used by measure.

But here is a case in which the Priest may say with the Apostle, *Omnia mihi licent, sed non omnia expediunt.*

The following points deserve consideration:—

1. Alcohol is no more a respecter of the clergy than of the laity.

2. Its physical effects overstimulate the nervous centres, inflame the blood, and excite the passions.

3. Its moral effects are to diminish the strength of the will, to cloud the reason and judgment, and to lead to the commission of innumerable sins, venial and mortal.

4. Used as a drug in certain stages of mortal disease, it preserves life, if the system has not been previously familiarised with its use; but a nature tainted by alcohol rapidly collapses.

5. With many the use of spirits creates a desire, and the desire becomes a craving: "In the end it will bite like a snake, and will spread abroad poison like a basilisk" (Prov. xxiii.).

6. A passion for alcohol is implanted in the constitution of many persons, clerical and lay alike, by heredity. A little drink arouses their

passion, which becomes ungovernable and maddening.

7. The use of spirits by priests, *recreationis causa*, is a distinct encouragement to their use (and abuse) by others. Human respect and inclination end by overcoming a young man's better judgment when the force of example is before him. If the superiors drink, why should not the inferiors, when they can get the chance? If Priests enjoying the support of one another indulge in the additional enjoyment of spirits, how much more may the Priest who lives alone and has no such support seek solace and comfort from the spirit bottle? In this way, alas! innumerable Priests are ruined and lost. Every one knows that drink is the bane of our flocks—the destruction of Catholic families, industrially, socially, morally, religiously. Are these good reasons for a resolution to refrain from the use of ardent spirits?

8. We ought to practise self-denial and fasting. To deny ourselves and fast from the use of spirits, from an Apostolic love for God and for souls, will obtain grace for ourselves and others.

There are certain customs which, we may hope, are dying out, but about which a young Priest

ought to make up his mind—*e.g.*, taking intoxicants in the morning; drinking malt liquor, wines, and spirits at the same meal; drinking in the houses of parishioners when making a call of charity or civility; keeping a supply of spirits within reach, that is, in the Priest's private room.

In some dioceses in Ireland suspension is incurred, *ipso facto*, for taking intoxicating drink in the morning; and in many dioceses abroad a Priest incurs censure if he take refreshment in a public-house.

9. The use of tobacco is not objectionable as is the use of spirits. Indeed, it is proved that the general use of tobacco in England has led to a diminution in the use of wines during and after dinner. It is a matter on which a Priest must make up his mind one way or another, and he had better do so upon definite grounds, and to God's honour, rather than allow himself to drift.

Against the habit of smoking it may be urged:—

1. That it is, more or less, a costly habit, and is so far a waste of money, and leads to waste of time; that it is a self-indulgence that can be done without; that it becomes injurious to health unless used very sparingly; that it is disagreeable

to many persons to find the Priest's breath or his room reeking of tobacco; that a person easily becomes a slave to the habit.

2. That we can hardly imagine the Apostles or the Saints making use of this indulgence were they to come among us.

3. That you are the freer the less you are bound by habits of this kind.

On the other hand, it is, *in se*, an innocent recreation; it promotes sociability; it acts as a sedative, and is found by some to be otherwise beneficial to health when used moderately. Some Priests living alone, in hard missions and on poor fare, more easily reconcile themselves to their lot by the use of tobacco without any other stimulant.

If you settle to use tobacco, you should restrict yourself as to time and quantity, for reasons that are obvious.

Lastly, while it is important that the young Priest, who has considered all these matters, should use his liberty in laying down for himself such rules of conduct as he may think most expedient and most pleasing to God, he will be careful not to censure the conduct of his seniors, who, by reason of age, traditions, health, or infirmity, may have used their liberty to arrive for

themselves at different conclusions. *Unusquisque in suo sensu abundet.* (Rom. xiv. 5.)

Another practical point to be decided is: How shall I furnish my room? What line shall I take with myself as to creature comforts? There are two views on this subject. The first is connected with the practice of Apostolic poverty, and that Apostolic hardness to self which is a part of penance, and is of great merit. According to this view, we should spend as little as possible upon comforts and luxuries, such as expensive and showy furniture, easy-chairs, and nicknacks and ornaments that furnish up a room and make it like the room of a rich or well-to-do layman.

Some natures are independent of such things, and naturally disregard them. So far as penance and poverty are concerned, these do not hinder their work, but rather brace them up. The thought of them purifies their intention and sustains their spirit, which is quite capable of itself of any excess in the way of pleasure or luxury. Such a person may therefore choose the harder, poorer side, because he thinks that this will be best for him.

The other view is in favour of furnishing your private room comfortably, because you know yourself well enough to feel that if it be comfortable

you will be less tempted to seek your rest and pleasure elsewhere, and that the poverty and hardness of the first view would be a hindrance to you, not a help.

A man may also say, I do not feel drawn to practise either poverty or penance by having my room poor and bare. I have means at my free disposal, and I think it fitting, refining, and therefore good for myself, to live in decent comfort.

Each will make his own choice, using his freedom according as his judgment may dictate.

We have but one caution to offer, and that is, not to furnish your room as though it were a lady's boudoir. Indulgence in this kind of taste tells unfavourably upon a Priest's own character, and stamps the man in the judgment of others.

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